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 www.arlestourisme.com

Reception office of Salin de Giraud
 Route d'Arles • Chemin départemental 36
 13129 Salin de Giraud • 04 42 86 89 77
 www.arlestourisme.com/fr/salin-de-giraud

Tourist office of Tarascon
 62, rue des Halles • 13150 Tarascon
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 www.tarascon-tourisme.com

Tourist office of Saint-Martin-de-Crau
 Avenue de la République
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Tourist office of Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer
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LEGEND

- Informations touristiques
- Gare
- Aéroport
- Port fluvial
- Port de plaisance
- Phare
- Parc Naturel Régional
- Marais salants
- Réserve Naturelle
- GR - Chemins de Saint-Jacques de Compostelle
- Eurovéloroute (EV17) ViaRhôna
- Eurovéloroute (EV8) La Méditerranée à vélo
- V65 Chemin de la Digue à la Mer
- Draille des 5 Gorges
- Patrimoine mondial (Arles, Avignon, Pont du Gard)
- Abbaye Saint-Michel de Frigolet (Tarascon)
- Primitiale et cloître Saint-Trophime (Arles)
- Collégiale Sainte-Marthe (Tarascon)
- Église Saint-Joseph (Boulbon)
- Église Saint-Martin (Saint-Martin-de-Crau)
- Église orthodoxe (Salin-de-Giraud)
- Sanctuaire et Église Notre-Dame de la Mer (Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer)
- Chapelle Saint-Gabriel (Tarascon)
- Chapelle Saint-Victor (Tarascon)
- Chapelle Saint-Marcellin (Boulbon)
- Chapelle Notre-Dame du Château (Saint-Étienne-du-Grès)
- Les Alyscamps-nécropole (Arles)
- Château de Tarascon (Tarascon)
- Tour Saint-Louis (Port-Saint-Louis-du-Rhône)
- Accueil pèlerins : Monastère des Prémontrés (Abbaye Saint-Michel de Frigolet)
- Maison du pèlerin et accueil jacquaire (Arles)
- Prieuré Notre-Dame des Champs (Bouchaud, Arles)
- Reliques (Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer, Arles, Tarascon)



PROVENCE, A BEACON OF EVANGELISATION

The ribbon... this legendary band of silk velvet decorates the headdresses of the traditional "Arlésienne" ladies celebrated in the Provençal cities of the Arles Crau Camargue Montagnette area.



• Celebration of Santa Martha, Tarascon

Let us follow this ribbon back in time to the beginnings of Christianity in Provence. In those days, it was wrapped around the tunics of the first disciples of Christ: Mary Salome, Mary mother of James, Maximinus, Trophimus, Saturninus, Martha and Mary Magdalene as well as their brother Lazarus. According to tradition, Mary Magdalene, Mary mother of James and Mary Salome accompanied Jesus from Galilee to his Calvary on the cross. Lazarus, given up for dead in his tomb is said to have been resurrected by Christ in front of Martha. As direct witnesses of the life of Christ, they were driven out of Bethany in Judea during the Roman persecutions around 48 AD.

All of them landed miraculously at Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer on a boat with no sails or oars. The difficult sea and weather conditions along this coast should have killed them but in fact favourable winds carried them to the

sandy shores of the Rhone Delta, one of the 4 largest in Europe. The new arrivals bore witness to the life of Christ and his message, and set out to spread the Gospel: Martha towards Tarascon, Lazarus towards Marseille, Mary-Magdalene and Maximus to Saint Maximin and Sainte Baume. Mary mother of James, Mary Salome and Sarah remained at their point of arrival until their death. This marked the beginning of the evangelisation of Gaul. From villages to towns, they went their separate ways inspired by the same passion to deliver their message and transmit their faith. In 314, the Council of Arles convened by Emperor Constantine the 1st marked the official birth of Christianity in Provence. In 502, Bishop Caesarius affirmed and consolidated the legitimacy of the Church of Arles and by his death in 542 had become one of the most revered Saints.



• Church of Saint-Gabriel, Tarascon

TOGETHER ON THE ROAD

THE BETHANY ROUTE

forms a loop at the heart of the Alpilles Crau Camargue Montagnette destination. As the Saints did, you can start your journey in the Camargue before heading to Arles, then Tarascon. Go to Les Alpilles, La Crau and the Salin De Giraud before returning to Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer by the Barcarin Ferry.

THE VIA FRANCIGINA OR "THE ROAD OF THE FRANKS"

this route marks a cultural and spiritual journey at the heart of Europe. This is one of the three largest Christian pilgrimages. It allows pilgrims from the north of the Alps and the Pyrenees to reach the Tomb of St. Peter in Rome, the eternal city. An historical route, it passes by the foot of the Church of Saint-Gabriel of Tarascon.

The French hiking Federation has named it GR 145.

THE VIA TOLOSANA

this is the Latin name of one of the four main pilgrimage routes to Santiago de Compostela. Arles was the gathering place of the pilgrims, who visited the relics of Saint Caesarius and Saint Trophimus. They would then leave for Toulouse on their way to Galicia. The trail is now called GR 653.

OVERLOOKING THE RHÔNE AND THE GR 42

Originating in Saint Etienne, this hiking trail passes through the Loire and Ardèche before stopping at Tarascon and Arles.

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE SAINTS OF PROVENCE

The first stage of your journey on the way to Bethany leads you to Arles, as recommended by the pilgrim's guide, to "those who go to Santiago de Compostela via Saint-Gilles, must visit Arles...".

On the outskirts of the Via Aurelia, the Alyscamps, an ancient necropolis whose Paleochristian cemetery grew around the funerary Basilica of St. Genest and then the unfinished church of Saint Honorat where the two saints are buried in the crypt. In the heart of the city, Saint Trophimus Cathedral and its cloister house the relics of Trophimus and of Caesarius, which can still be seen today.



• The Alyscamps, Arles

Then take the road to Tarascon. Opposite the town's castle stands the Collegiate Church of Sainte-Marthe. The sanctuary preserves the relics of Saint Martha. A few kilometres away, in the small medieval fortified village of Boulbon, the Saint-Marcellin chapel is a jewel of Romanesque art dating back to the 10th century.

Atop the green hills surrounding Montagnette, the site of the neo-Gothic Saint-Michel-de-Frigolet abbey is home to the chapel of Notre-Dame-du-Bon-Médice, whose statue is revered by pilgrims.

Head for the Saint-Gabriel chapel in the Alpilles, then cross the Coussouls de Crau National Nature Reserve, grazed for millennia by flocks of sheep.

Continue to Port St Louis and board the Barcarin Ferry, which drops you off at the Salin De Giraud. Here, the Orthodox Church of the Dormition of the most holy Mother of God, built in 1952, pays homage to the Greeks who settled in the Camargue between the two great wars to compensate for the lack of manpower in the salt works.

Finally, explore the Camargue Regional Park and return to the home of the Saint Marys. The relics of Mary Salome and Mary mother of James are kept in a reliquary that hangs in the centre of the church of the Our-Lady-of-the-Sea. In the Crypt of the church, is a statue of Sarah. It is not known whether Sarah was a handmaid for the Holy Marys or if she welcomed the exiles from the Holy Land whilst already living in the Camargue. Far more clear is Sarah's importance for the gypsies who worship her. She is not an official saint.



• Chapel of Saint-Joseph, Saint Michel de Frigolet abbey

PORTRAITS OF THE PROVENCE SAINTS

SAINT MARY SALOME

Wife of the fisherman Zebedee, she is mother of two of the Twelve Apostles: John, who is said to have received a vision of the Christ of the Apocalypse, and James the Greater, first Bishop of Jerusalem revered at Santiago de Compostella.

SAINT MARY THE MOTHER OF JAMES

In the gospel, she appears under the name of Mary of Cleophas. Cleophas or Clopas would have been her husband's first name. Mary mother of James had four sons, including Apostles James the Lesser and Joseph. After the Passion, the two Saints (Mary Salome and Mary, mother of James) went to the Jesus' tomb to embalm his body. They were present at his resurrection together with Mary Magdalene.

SAINT MARTHA

After her arrival at Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer, the inhabitants of Tarascon called her to the rescue because they were terrorised by the Tarasque, an amphibian monster living on the banks of the Rhône river. After taming the vile beast, then finished off by the inhabitants, Saint Martha settled here and evangelised the city of Tarascon. She remained here until her death around the year 68 AD and has since been the patron saint of the city.

SAINT CAESARIUS

A major spiritual figure in the Church of the early centuries, Bishop of Arles from 502 to 542, he founded the monastery

dedicated to St John, of which his sister Caesaria became the first Abbess. It was for this community of nuns that Caesarius drafted the first monastic rule specifically for a women's community.

SAINT TROPHIMUS

He is said to have been the first Bishop of Arles before the year 254 AD. The first mention of his name dates back to the 5th century. The Romanesque cathedral of Arles was named after him from the 12th century. A statue on the portal and a stained glass window pay homage to him.

SAINT GENEST

A clerk in the Roman Court of Arles and a Christian, he refused to register the edicts ordering the persecution of Christians. Seized by the Roman police, he was decapitated. Saint Genest, also known as Genes (3rd Century), is the only acknowledged Arlesian martyr together with Monseigneur du Lau. Several churches were dedicated to him, including one at the Alyscamps, the current St Honorat church. The Church of St Trophimus, containing the relics of the saint's body, has a chapel of St Genes.

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••• SAINT HONORAT

In 426 he left the island of Lérins to become Bishop of Arles. At that time, the diocese was torn apart by divisions, and Saint-Honorat re-established peace, returning a state of discipline, strength and holiness to the Church of Arles.

SAINT MARCELLINUS

Pope and martyr in 304, under the reign of the Roman Emperor Diocletian is revered at Boulbon.

He was famous for his power over liquids in general and the plain of Boulbon needed this protection, in the face of the unpredictable neighbouring Rhone river with its floods and droughts. According to the popular saying: " Saint Marcellin bon per l'aigo, bon per lou vin ", " Saint Marcellinus is good for water and good for wine ", wine he blessed was said to heal fevers.

SIGNIFICANT RELIGIOUS BUILDINGS OF THE AREA

In this corner of Provence, numerous buildings have been dedicated to the Saints, many of them Romanesque, and they figure among the most famous in religious architecture from the 9th to the 11th century: barrel vaulted ceilings, ancient inspired columns and capitals, nipped columns and capitals, numerous sculptures on the facade. From towns to villages, explore these architectural jewels...

NOTRE-DAME-DE-LA-MER CHURCH AT SAINTES-MARIES DE LA MER

Like a lighthouse, its silhouette stands out on the Camargue skyline. It is here, in the upper chapel that is also called Saint-Michel chapel, that the relics of the Saints discovered in 1444 are preserved. A first church was built around a well that was fed by a branch of the Rhone river. Saint Caesarius, Bishop of Arles, mentions it in his will. The sanctuary, for its part, was built from the 11th century. The crypt houses the revered statue of Sarah, servant of the Saints and patroness of the Gypsies. A rich collection of ex-votos adorns the walls of the church.



• Saint Trophimus' Archbishop's, Arles

SAINT TROPHIMUS' ARCHBISHOP'S PALACE AND ITS CLOISTER IN ARLES

It took ten centuries to complete the building. The construction of the Arlesian cathedral began in the 5th century and ended in the 15th century. This Romanesque church has an elegant façade reminiscent of Roman architecture. The nave and the transept are part of Romanesque art. A gothic choir completes the building. The church has hosted major events: councils, coronations and royal weddings. Listed as a historical monument in 1846, its cloister features two galleries, highlights of provençal Romanesque art and two Gothic style galleries.

COLLEGIATE SAINTE MARTHE IN TARASCON

A Provençal Romanesque church built in honour of Saint Martha, who freed the inhabitants of Tarascon from the Tarasque, the Collegiate Church has been listed as a historical Monument since 1840. Remodelled over the centuries, the building features several styles of architecture.

The crypt, which houses Saint Martha's relics, the perimeter walls, the portal and the small bell tower are all that remain from the Romanesque period. The extensions bear the hallmark of the Gothic style. The Boisselin-Moiteissier organ with its polychrome buffet is also listed.

SAINT MICHEL DE FRIGOLET ABBEY IN TARASCON

Radiant in the heart of the Montagnette pine forest, the site contains a group of remarkable buildings: the Romanesque Church of Saint-Michel, the originally Romanesque chapel of Notre-Dame-du-Bon-Remède with its baroque decoration, the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception in neo-Gothic style and the cloister of Roman origin remodelled in the 17th century. Alphonse Daudet mentioned it in his collection of «Letters from my Windmill». The Order of Canons Regular of Prémontré are resident there.

Other architectural treasures worth a detour on the way: the chapel of Saint Gabriel, the Church of Saint-Martin-de-Crau...



• Notre-Dame-de-la-Mer church, Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer

FROM TRADITION TO PARTY OR WHEN TRADITION BECOMES A PARTY

A year marked by celebrations, processions and traditional festivals!

IN SPRING

- Notre-Dame du Château Procession in Saint-Etienne-du-Grès and Tarascon: 5th Sunday after Easter. During the pilgrimage, the statue of the Virgin from Notre-Dame du Château leaves its sanctuary in the Alpilles to be taken in procession to the Church of Saint-Etienne-du-Grès and finally to the Collegiate Church of Sainte-Marthe in Tarascon. Where, according to tradition it stays for 40 days.
- Gardian Festival in Arles: on May 1st with homage to Saint-Georges and a "messo parado" mass in provençal in the Church of La Major.



• Sara's celebration, Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer

May 1st is also the date when the Queen of Arles is elected which takes place every 4 years.

- The Spring Festival in Saint-Martin-de-Crau on the 2nd weekend in May to celebrate pastoralism and the flocks leaving for their alpine summer pastures.
- Sara's Pilgrimage, Saint Mary mother of James and Salome in Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer: 24th May and 25th May. The shrines containing the relics of the lady Saints are brought down from the upper Chapel of the Church of Notre-Dame-de-la-Mer. Sarah's statue is carried to the sea. The Holy boat is blessed in front of the Gypsy people, the Arlésiennes costumed women and the Camargue "gardians". The pilgrimage was introduced by the marquis Falco de Baroncelli in 1935.
- Celebration of Our-Lady-of-Good Remedy at the Saint Michel de Frigolet Abbey: Whit Monday. For 900 years, the faithful have climbed the hill at Montagnette to pray to the Virgin Mary.

IN AUTUMN

- The procession of bottles Saint-Marcellin Boulbon: 1st June. According to tradition, in the year 304, father Marcellin was thrown into a dungeon. He is said to have found a remnant of an amphora there. After imploring the Lord, a miracle brought him an amphora full of wine. Hence Boulbon's procession is for men only. They all go to the Saint-Marcellin Romanesque chapel with a bottle of wine that is opened at the end of the ceremony.



• Gardian festival, Arles

IN WINTER

- Winter pilgrimage to Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer: 1st Sunday in December, it commemorates the discovery of the remains of Holy Lady Saints and the exhibition of their relics by King René in 1448. This pilgrimage brings together the inhabitants of Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer and the Camargue.
- The "Pastrage" in Saint Martin de Crau: last Sunday of January. Blessing of the lamb by a priest, followed by mass in the Provençal language with poetry readings and provençal songs. Traditional "navette" biscuits are handed out (these are flavoured with orange flower water or aniseed and in the shape of a boat). Procession of shepherds with their sheep, of the mounted Camargue herdsmen or "gardians" and folk groups.
- Midnight masses: procession through the village with shepherds and the sacrificial lamb. Provençal songs resound in the churches. The mass may be held in "Lengo nostro" – the local Provençal dialect.

Villages of the area celebrate the bonfires of Saint-Jean and Saint-Elmo with the Carreto Ramado. "Pégoulades", or parades in costume to the sound of flutes and tambourines, are organised throughout the summer season.

Christmas markets and figurine fairs ("santons") in all the villages of the area.

THE BROTHERHOODS: A LIVING COLLECTIVE HERITAGE

Appearing in the 5th century, a brotherhood is above all a corporation or guild whose vocation is to preserve a skill through a coded form of transmission. From the 10th century onwards, they incorporate the concepts of solidarity and mutual assistance. They are sometimes dedicated to the veneration of a patron saint.

THE BROTHERHOOD OF ST. GEORGE FOR THE CAMARGUE «GARDIANS» OR HORSE-RIDING STOCKMEN

The great fame of St. George, a mounted soldier in the Roman army martyred in the 3rd century, stems from the legend that he slayed a dragon. His fight inspired great artists. The mounted stockmen or "gardians" founded their brotherhood in his name in 1512. Its mission is to provide assistance to professional "gardians". It strives to preserve their traditions, habits and customs and the Camargue territory. Originally celebrated on April 23rd, Saint George's day, the annual feast is now held on May 1st.

THE BROTHERHOOD OF THE SAINT MARYS

Set up in 1315, officially recognised in 1338, the brotherhood brings together lay members whose aims are to: honour the Holy Marys through ceremonies, processions and pilgrimages, to maintain the Upper Chapel, to maintain a connection with other brotherhoods and the Travellers and to bring help and comfort to people in difficulty.

In 2013, the Brotherhood was in charge of the renovation of the Saint Marys small boat. Its work also involves conserving the relics. Members wear a blue over-blower decorated with the Camargue Cross, which evokes faith, hope and charity.

THE COMMUNITY OF SISTERS OF MARTHA

At their beginnings, a work dedicated to Saint Martha led to the construction and maintenance of the Church of Tarascon. At their side, the Brotherhood developed, the first documented traces of which date back to the 15th century. Today, it includes 25 sisterhoods whose missions are to accompany pilgrimages, to serve the parish through various religious actions, to assist the sick as well as people in difficulty.

THE BROTHERHOOD OF THE PRIORS OF NOTRE-DAME-DU-CHATEAU

Since 1242, this confraternity has officiated to pay homage to Notre-Dame-du-Château. Each year, two new priors are chosen to organise the pilgrimage. When they are elected on the 2nd Sunday of Easter, they become members of the Honourable Brotherhood of Priors of Notre-Dame-du-Château.

THE BROTHERHOOD OF SAINT ÉLOI (SAINT ELMO)

Several corporations revere this very popular Saint who was bishop of Noyon. He is celebrated on two dates: 1st December, the anniversary of his death, and 25th June, the date of the transfer of his relics in 1157. In 1373, a brotherhood of Saint-Éloi was founded in Avignon and spread to the surrounding villages. The colourful festival revolves around the Carreto Ramado cavalcade, a cart decorated with branches of elm pulled by a draft horse.

A SPIRITUAL WELCOME

Where to stay with local congregations.

Association Accueil Pèlerins des Chemins d'Arles APCA
Contact: Paul Debard
06 83 26 13 16 or 04 90 96 29 09 / renee.debard@wanadoo.fr

La maison du pèlerin et du voyageur
Open all year round
26, place Pomme • 13200 Arles
06 99 71 11 89
aubergepelerins@gmail.com

Prieuré Notre Dame des Champs de Bouchaud
2098, Path Bouchaud • 13200 Arles
04 90 47 21 30
hotelleriendeschamps@orange.fr

HOSTING BY PARISHES

Parish of TARASCON
Place de la Concorde • 13150 Tarascon
04 90 91 09 50
paroisse.tarascon@gmail.com

Parish of ARLES
12, rue du Cloître • 13200 Arles
04 90 96 07 38
paroisse.st.trophime@free.fr

Abbaye St Michel de Frigolet
D81 • 13150 Tarascon
04 90 90 70 07
abbaye@frigolet.com

Monastère de la Visitation
The Sisters of the Visitation only host groups of pilgrims in the context of a spiritual retreat
1, boulevard Joseph Desanat
13150 Tarascon
04 90 91 04 40

Maison de Béthanie
Opening in 2020
2, rue Flécher • 13150 Tarascon
04 90 91 09 50

OTHER ACCOMMODATION IN TRADITIONAL HOTELS
See the Tourist Offices' websites.

Parish of ST MARTIN de CRAU
Rue Léo Léléé
13210 Saint-Martin-de-Crau
04 90 47 39 94 • updelacrau@sfr.fr

Parish of SAINTES MARIES DE LA MER
19, place Jean XXIII
13460 Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer
04 90 97 80 25

A DIFFERENT WAY TO EXPLORE THE AREA

A tour to follow independently or with a guide specialised in sophrology for all while walking, finding spiritual nourishment, in harmony with nature...