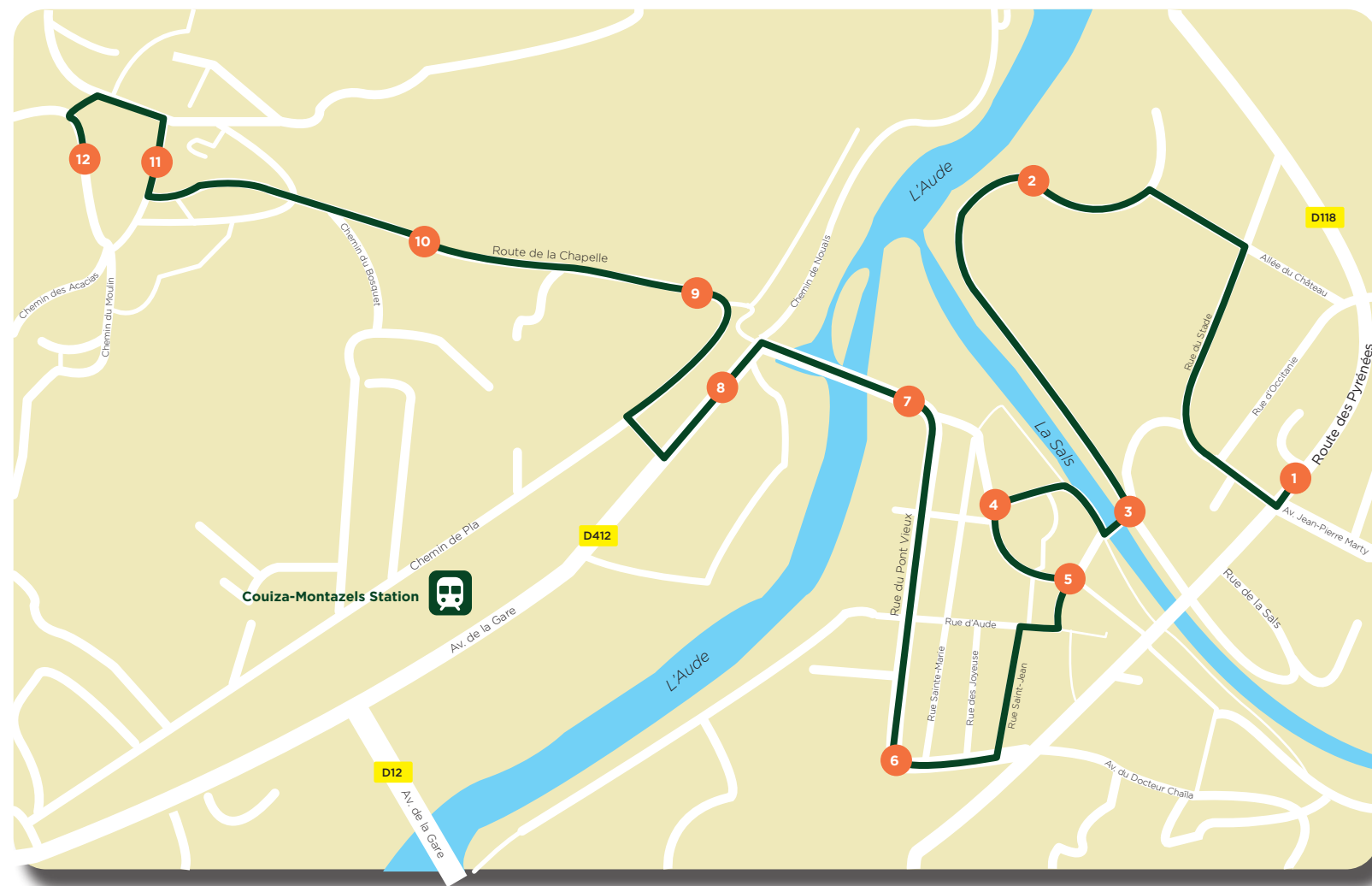


Visit of the city



1 DEPARTURE FROM THE TOURIST OFFICE

2 THE DUCS DE JOYEUSE CASTLE

Like the traditional feudal castle, the one of Couiza is organized around a rectangular courtyard and thick circular towers were built on each of its four angles. The external appearance is still medieval. All four façades made of one-meter-thick walls have no windows at street level. The four circular towers are particularly sturdy with a thickness of two meters and are pierced with loopholes adapted to the use of firearms. The inner courtyard is built in a very fine sandstone that fortunately contrasts with the external military architecture. Everything there remind the bright Renaissance architecture. The castle was ranked in 1913. Nowadays, the Castle is a 4 stars hotel-restaurant.

3 THE RIVERSIDES OF THE SALZ

Several saltwater streams give birth to Salz. They run from the saliferous ground at the top of a small valley, close to Sougraigne, Bugarach Mountain and Rennes-les-Bains. Enlarged by the Blanque River running from Bugarach, then by the Rialsesse from the Col du Paradis and the forest of Arques, the Salz feeds into the Aude River, in Couiza. The 26th of September 1992, the tragic floods had destroyed and damaged about four hundred homes in Couiza. Since then, the rehabilitation and development works were completed.

4 SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST'S CHURCH

The actual church was built on an ancient building which goes back to the 9th century. On December 30th, 1855, a report highlighted the importance of the reconstruction and extension of the church. Actually, the reconstruction was so important that almost all the church was taken to pieces then rebuild. The stones came from the quarry of Alet and Rennes les Bains. Couiza's church is a perfect example of the typical architecture presents in the area from Limoux to Quillan.

6 EDOUARD PECH PARK

In 2011, the municipality decided to revive the names of former mayors who are nowadays dead and who had an impact during their time for their commitment to their town. Edouard Pech, born in 1903 and died in 1992, was the mayor of Couiza two times, just after the end of the WW2 and then from 1952 to 1959. The municipal park bears his name.

5 DENIS SQUARE

In the 60^s, the municipality wanted to extend the former square of the town hall and at the same time to commemorate the two men from Couiza by sealing a slab with their name on the wall of their house. They were great members of the resistance in Lyon from 1942 to 1945. Their name was Denis Eugene and Denis Henri, father and son. They died during their deportation after they were denounced. In honor of these men, the new square was named "Denis Square".

7 LE PONT VIEUX

The existence of a first bridge in Couiza was confirmed by an inheritance made in 1280. The lords of Couiza were receiving a tax on goods traveling between Catalogne and Toulouse. During the 17th century, the marquis of Arques and Couiza, Claude Hyacinthe of Rébé, organized some works of adjustment. Thanks to him, the village owns a beautiful cofferdam made of cut stones that protects efficiently from the spate of the Aude. The village also owns him the reconstruction of the "Pont sur Aude" also called "Pont de Montazels" in 1682. This bridge was raised and its wooden deck was replaced by arches made of cut stones.

8 HAT FACTORY

It was from 1830 and mostly in 1878, with the arrival of the railway, that the hat industry would know an important rise in the area. During the Golden Age, up to 600 workers were working at the Montazels great factory and produced 5000 hats and 6000 cones each day. Some big names in fashion ordered there like the Maisons Lanvin and Balenciaga for the haute couture. Unfortunately, hats were less and less worn or not at all because of an unknown fact at the time: trends. The last French hat factory closed its doors on March 2018. In 2019 a cooperative Montcapel was created in order to preserve a unique know-how and products again the hats.

12 THE CHURCH AND THE CASTLE

The actual Saint-Cécile Church, build in 1677-1678, has been restored partly at the end of the 19th century. It replaced a place of worship that was in all likelihood near from the actual castle. The Church has a patrimonial interest because of its homogeneity, its perfect state of preservation, and the originality of its monumental entry with its classical inspiration. The vestige of Montazels castle also has a large patrimonial interest. The well conserved medieval masonry can be dated back to the 12th-13th century. They match with the former medieval castle of Montazels that was built on the XI-12th century, when the actual village was built. The Religions Wars that occurred during the last third of the 16th century and the reconstruction of the castle the next century had considerably changed the appearance of the place. The medieval castrum (the fortified village) and the church had been completely destroyed. Nowadays, the castle is a private property, abandoned and its structure continues to deteriorate.

11 THE FOUNTAIN OF GRIFFOUL

In 1785, the vicar of the parish Jean Bernard Carles decided to ornate the central square with a fountain. To do so, he got founds by donations from his citizens. To provide water to the fountain, he used a fountain located two or three kilometers from the village. "La fontaine aux trois dauphins" is nowadays the patrimonial emblem of the village.

10 PANORAMA RENNES-LE-CHATEAU, COUSTAUSSA, PECH CARDOU

First of all, the Magdala Tower, is the emblematic monument of a little village located on the opposite side of the hill: Rennes-le-Chateau. At this legendary site, in the end of the 19th century, a countryside vicar had become incredibly wealthy by digging in the old church's crypt.

Then, a mountain outlines the landscape by its rounded shape. The Pech Cardou, the little brother of another sacred peak, the Bugarach that culminates at 795m. Slightly on the left, the ruins of Coustaussa castle are stuck on the slope of a hill. It is a vast medieval set greatly adjusted during the Renaissance, then used as a stone quarry on the 19th century. Nowadays, the ruins aren't secured for visits and the castle is a private property.

9 THE ORATORY

The Notre Dame du Mont Carmel's Oratory was built by the inhabitants of Montazels in 1834 to thank the Holy Virgin for protecting the village from a cholera epidemic that occurred in 1832-1833 in the region of Couiza.



*My guided tour
Ceniza - Montazels*

limouxin
TOURISME



limouxin
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tourisme@cc-limouxin.fr
www.limouxin-tourisme.fr

Office de tourisme du Limouxin
7 Avenue du Pont de France - 11300 Limoux
+33 4 68 31 11 82