




# FANJEAUX

MEDIEVAL CITY

T O U R   G U I D E



# FANJEAUX MEDIEVAL CITY

 DOWNLOAD FREE APPS



Cathar Country - the guide



Castrum - the game




VisitCollines





audetourisme


payscathare.org


## Map key

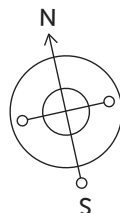
 Outline of the perimeter of the site in the Middle Ages

 Station for this leaflet

 Station for the artistic trail

 Station for the Cathar Country app

 Station for the Castrum app









...Head towards the shops, cross over in front of the bakery and take rue de la Fontaine Romaine opposite. After the sculpture, carry on towards place de la Vierge...

## THE FOUNTAIN AND PLACE DE LA VIERGE 1

### Art work | The knight

During the Middle Ages, the most important event in Fanjeaux was the Crusade against the Albigensians. The town was quickly captured at the beginning of the 13th century. This war, waged against the Cathar faithful, condemned as heretical by the Roman Church, was a battle between French and Occitan knights, both subjects of the same king...

### 👁 More to see

The fountain is backed by a large reservoir fed by an aqueduct cut in the rock.

### + Further information

Fanjeaux was a significant, strategic site, overlooking the plain. When Dominique de Guzman, the future Saint Dominic, arrived here in 1206, he would have seen a castle surrounded by vast walls: several towers and gates defended the entrance to the town which, at that time, was inhabited by more than 50 noble families. Trencavel, the Viscount of Carcassonne, was the main feudal overlord.



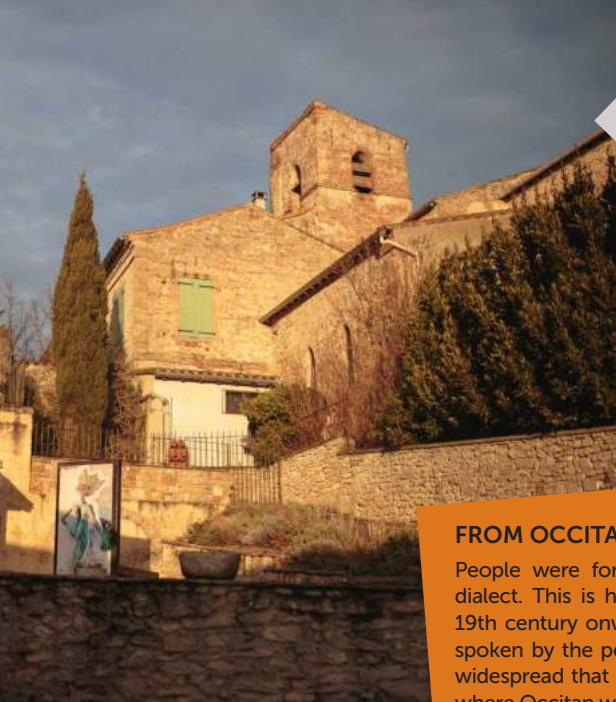
### 👁 More to see

The carved, discoid cross at the bridge entrance: on one side is a hand in a blessing gesture and on the other a lamb bearing a banner of the cross... Since the 13th century, these religious symbols, intermingled with crests, have gradually faded.



...walk across the 17th century bridge and take rue des Fargues opposite...





## THE SCHOOL SQUARE 2

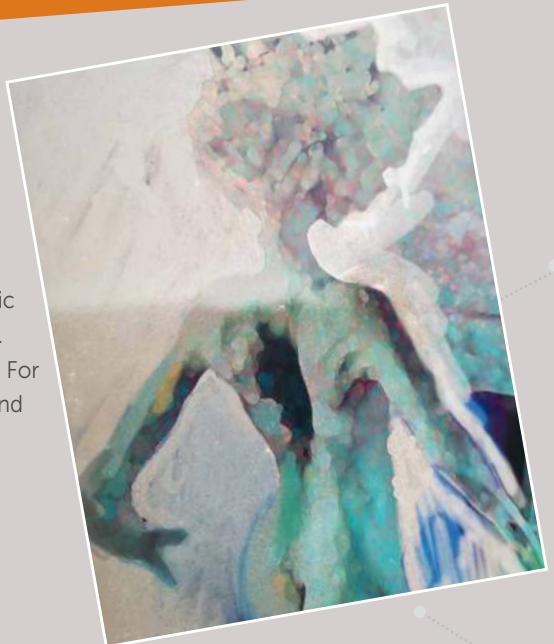
This small, republican square is dominated by the pink silhouette of the bell tower belonging to the Convent of the "Frères Prêcheurs", the order founded by Saint Dominic. During the previous century, classes were held all over the village. A mixed class was taught here, on the ground floor of the school building, above which was the schoolmaster's accommodation.

### FROM OCCITAN TO FRENCH

People were forbidden from speaking the regional dialect. This is how Occitan was classified from the 19th century onwards. However, it was the language spoken by the people of the region. In fact it was so widespread that many only learnt French at school ... where Occitan would sometimes prove useful, helping them to avoid spelling mistakes! For example, a word ending in "at" in Occitan represents an "é" in French: libertat, liberté. The ending "ada" equates to "ée": annada, année...

### Art work | La Parfaite (The Perfect)

"Parfait.e" was the ironic term used to describe these "Bons Hommes" and "Bonnes Femmes" (literally Good Men/Women), which was how the Cathars referred to themselves. The Cathars were Christians who, along with others at that time, did not share the belief held by the Catholic church about the creation of the physical world. For them, God could not be responsible for Evil. For them, there were two creative principles: God and the Devil.



### + Further information

The art trail that punctuates your visit around the village is the work of sculptor, Loïc Tellier.  
Website: [loictellier.com](http://loictellier.com)



... Continue along rue des Fargues; at the intersection with rue du Four, you'll see on your right, the house of Hugues Destrem, then take rue des Tisseynes on the right.



## THE HOUSE OF HUGUES DESTREM 3

### "Freedom makes me happy"

Turn around ... look above the garden wall ... On the front of the house you will see the motto associated with this fervent revolutionary. Hugues Destrem was a business man who ran a grocery store and a politician whose sole allegiance was to the newly founded Republic.

### A fun and lively town

Up until the last century, Fanjeaux was teeming with people and shops. They lined the main road that you've just walked along, extending around the covered markets. Grocery stores allowed consumers to buy goods directly. You could find everything here. Salt cod, sugar that the grocer broke into small pebbles using a hammer, oil, coffee, dried vegetables, nougat and turrón etc. There were also street vendors who sold rabbits or glasses, chimney sweeps, moonshiners and even bootleggers "*l'alumetaire*" (matchstick makers), selling homemade matchsticks at bargain prices

→ ...Your next stop is at the end of rue des Tisseynes, in front of the house that stands on the corner.



## THE "SIX-SOUS" HOUSE 4

Six sous is not a lot of money but you certainly need it if you have children to raise. The mother who lived here would ask passersby for financial assistance ... hence the name: "Six-sous." The "Six Sous" house, built during the 17th century, features a half-timbered façade. This type of construction, which was more economical than stone and quicker to put up, was instrumental in the development of towns. In this district, there are many houses that date from the 18th and 19th centuries. The street name, rue du Four, nearby, is a reminder of the village oven that once stood here where, during the Middle Ages, residents could cook their bread in exchange for payment to the local Seigneur.



### HIDE WHAT WE CANNOT SEE...

Half-timbering, or "*corondatge*" in Occitan, refers to the wooden framework that forms the load-bearing structure of the house. The "cob," used to fill the spaces between the timber, was often made from earth and plant fibres. Here, however, it is a mix of briquettes and small stones, bound together with mortar. In Occitan, these two fillings fall into the category of either "*tourtis*" (twisted strands) or "*massaca*" (small stones). This structure was covered with a protective coating. The houses that we see before us today are the equivalent of the exposed concrete and steel bars you find in modern-day buildings.

**Art work | The Consolamentum**The theme

The Consolamentum is the only sacrament acknowledged by the Cathar believers: it was a combination of blessing, baptism and last rites. Both men and women could administer the Consolamentum, unlike Catholic sacraments which, for the last 900 years, only men have been able to perform.

The symbol

This woman, depicted in primitive form, her golden hair in the shape of a halo, emerges symbolically from a red, glowing door, blessing and guiding those souls around her, represented by burnt stakes.

The technique

The figure, which is made of steel, stands on a 30mm thick sheet-metal base. The steel has been cut using an oxy-acetalene torch and has been left untreated. The burnt wood is preserved using a Japanese technique based on oil absorption.

**Art work | The Troubadour**

The benches are engraved with a few lines by Peire Vidal, a Toulouse troubadour who lived in the late 12th century, famous for the lightness of his verse, his free spirit and his forthright way of talking. In one of his poems he makes reference to Fanjeaux, a place that he undoubtedly visited.

**+ Further information**

The name "Fanjeaux" comes from Fanum Jovis, a small temple dedicated to Jupiter. A sacred place with a source of water, which is all you need for a village to flourish...

**+ Further information**

The aristocratic families who lived in Fanjeaux were always keen to celebrate. Troubadours, at the time, devised a new type of literature, written in Occitan, which was sung by balladeers. The "*Fin'Amor*" introduced a new concept to aristocratic society: that of courtly love and a new model of the male-female relationship. "*Sirventes*", on the other hand, were more free-form songs with satirical lyrics that criticised and attacked all kinds of people and events.

## SAINT DOMINIC'S HOUSE 6

**Art work | Saint-Dominic**The theme

Dominic came here to preach and demonstrate the purity of the Catholic faith. He believed in the spoken word, not in violence. The Inquisition, led by the Dominicans, was only invented after his death...

The symbol

He is pointing to the fireball that revealed the site of Prouilhe to him, where he founded the first community of women. His tattered clothes symbolise his vow of poverty. His scarf floats behind him, a little like Saint Exupéry's Petit Prince. It lends a touch of movement, passion and charisma to his idealism.

The technique

Steel and glass head.



Religious communities are still much in evidence in Fanjeaux. Both the Convent of the Frères Prêcheurs and Saint Dominic's house are open to visitors. These visits must be requested in advance. The Tourist Office will provide you with the necessary contact information.



## LE SEIGNADOU 7

### Art work | The Disputation

The vivid landscape, extending as far as Bugarach and the Pyrénées, serves as a backdrop to The Disputation, a group of figures exchanging conflicting ideas and opinions. There's a bench where you can sit and listen to their endless debate or whisper more tender words, if you prefer...



### Prouilhe, the first site

When you lean against the railings, you can glimpse Prouilhe monastery at the foot of Fanjeaux hill. In the 11th century, this ancient site which has been occupied since the Iron Age, was the site of a Seigneurial castle that was later replaced by Fanjeaux castle in the 12th century. Saint Dominic founded a monastery here where he welcomed the first Cathar women to convert to Catholicism. As the property of Pope Innocent III, this community was placed under Papal protection and quickly became very powerful. A vast, new monastery was built at the beginning of the 14th century: a curtain wall with 15 towers protected two churches and two cloisters. This monastery was destroyed by a fire and then the Revolution but was rebuilt at the end of the 19th century.



👉...Retrace your steps and take the first street on the right, Gourguet San Domenge, opposite Saint Dominic's house, and continue until you reach the corner of rue Juiverie.

## The changing colours of time 8

The landscape opens onto the Lauragais plain, extending as far as the Black Mountain opposite, Castelnaudary and then Toulouse, to the left. A succession of different crops appeared, at various times, throughout the ages. Let's consider how the colours of the landscape changed over time: in the Middle Ages, golden wheat swayed in the Cers wind alongside ephemeral, blue-hued flax flowers, pea plants with wispy shoots and blossoming broad beans nestled between leaves like white and black speckled butterflies. In the mid 15th century, it was the bright yellow flowers of woad plants that dominated the skyline. Today it is the warm gold of sunflowers mixed with the brown of sorghum plants. Corn, in all its rustling green splendour, appeared later in the 17th century, arriving from America, via Spain.



### "IT'S RAINING INSULTS!"

In the mid 15th century, the woad trade helped create wealth and establish the reputation of the Lauragais region. When this trade collapsed, merchants from Toulouse then turned to wheat. This crop - bread wheat - covered nearly two-thirds of the Lauragais region, ensuring the wealth of landowners until the mid 19th century. Corn appeared later. It produced an excellent yield, becoming

the staple diet of the general population. Hence the expression: "It's raining insults," used during the last century when June rainfall would ruin the wheat crop belonging to the rich owners, helping the corn, grown by the poor ...unbelievable!



👉...go back to the church, via rue Juiverie, lined with low walls, covered with lady orchids, lavender and wisteria...Take the small road on the right that runs alongside the church...

## THE CHURCH 9

This little church - a church that Saint Dominic knew well - is a fine example of Languedoc Gothic architecture. The bell tower, with its soaring steeple, visible from afar, symbolises the dominance of the Catholic church. Inside, the opulence and excess of the 18th century Baroque period is much in evidence.



### For whom the bell tolls

You may hear the joyous sound of a bell striking the hour.

The language of bells has long had its own special code. The knell, for example, where a bell is rung slowly, announced a death. In the early 20th century, the death knell was used to summon the entire village to the church for a burial. Men would stay outside during mass and the wake, held at the home of the deceased. They would talk loudly. 1 long strike followed by 3 short strikes meant that a man had died. 1 long strike followed by 2 short strikes meant a woman had died. Regular strikes on a smaller bell, meant the death of a child ...

### Merry month of May

Last century, during the month of May - the month of Mary - the church was filled every night with children and young people who came to say the rosary and sing litanies. It was a great opportunity for girls and boys to enjoy a moonlight encounter behind the church!

### Miracle!

1820. A procession deposited a beam, branded by fire, inside the church. This beam helps keep alive the memory of a major debate that took place in the Middle Ages, between the Catholics and Cathars. Both faiths argued freely, Saint Dominic on one side and Guilbert de Castres on the other. At the end of this Dispute, the writings of Saint Dominic and those of his opponents were burned. The fire destroyed the Cathar texts while St Dominic's parchment flew up to the ceiling 3 times, leaving a black mark on the beam, later deemed to be sacred.

## THE COVERED MARKETS 10

These magnificent covered markets date back to the 18th century. They form the beating heart of the village. The surrounding roads still retain evidence of the shops which flourished here from the 16th century onwards. You can recognize them by their large ground floor windows which are often semi-circular.



### A good party

The Covered Markets, an area dedicated primarily to trade, are also used to host the village festival which takes place on the 15th August. Parties were a rare occurrence in the early 20th century and quite an occasion: the market was decorated with boxwood and fern garlands, that you had pick yourself... Musicians needed to be accommodated etc. When finances permitted, they invited popular bands to perform. This was what happened in 1928. Twice over, in fact! Two political parties were competing that year, both keen to win the hearts of the electorate. The city council provided a string orchestra from Toulouse who set up under the covered markets. The opposition invited Paris-Jazz from Narbonne, who set up in the road, as they weren't allowed in the market. The two parties clashed: one band played and then the other responded, continuously, without a break - and everyone danced more than ever!

### See you at the café

During the last century, Fanjeaux had 7 cafés, 3 of which were in the square. Cafés had become a crucial part of the social fabric. They were places to discuss hunting and politics, to play cards, billiards and darts which was very popular in the region. There was also dancing. On market days, farmers from the surrounding villages would come to sell their produce and relax. During fairs, the square would assume a festive air with a carousel; people would arrive from all over, not to mention droves of livestock. Business was concluded with a handshake. The cafés were packed.



## THE CONVENT OF THE FRÈRES PRÊCHEURS 11

With its impressive facade, extending the length of the road behind the covered market, the convent of the Frères Prêcheurs certainly manages to convey its importance. Discreetly positioned, on the left, is a sculpture.

### Art work | Faith

#### The theme

All faith goes beyond discord, transcending reality.

#### The symbol

The sculpture represents the creation of the universe. The red stone, which contains the entire universe, is about to expand; the elements will move away from each yet still remain linked, joined by an invisible

dimension. The man is gazing at the world ecstatically. His expression conveys a sense of spirituality and faith in something greater than himself.

#### The technique

Glass, steel, glazed terracotta.

...Turn away from the sculpture, walk past the convent, turn left down rue des Cavaliers, and then take the small street on the right. At the end of the road, you'll see a path that leads to another work of art.



## THE CRUSADE 12

### Art work | The Crusade

#### + Further information

The Crusade against the Albigensians began in 1209 with the massacre at Béziers: "Kill them all, God will recognize his own!" The persecution by Pope Innocent III of this Christian enemy, declared to be heretical, was relentless. A powerful army swept across the region, encouraged by the same promises made to those who had joined the Eastern Crusades: forgiveness of sins and the right to seize property from enemies of the Catholic faith.

### Powerless in the face of the mighty machine, man accepts the fate that war decides...

At the end of 19th century and at the beginning of 20th century, military service became a genuine rite of passage marking the transition for young men from child to adulthood. Between 1872 and 1889, the length of service was determined by lottery: a "good" number meant a short service of just 1 year, a "bad" number meant 5 years' service. Sometimes, wealthy individuals tried to manipulate fate by buying a "good" number from someone poorer. In 1905, military service became compulsory for a duration of 2 years. The Annual Review Board, which was held in Fanjeaux, the region's capital, selected those deemed fit for service. It was a solemn occasion where young people would parade naked in front of doctors and authorities. Judged "Good for service" they would wear their cockade rosette with pride, ready to embark on adult life - except for a bit of permissible larking...

### "Tustet:" declaring war on grouches!

You needed a large pebble cleverly attached to a system of strings. You then waited until nightfall before attaching it to the door of your bad-tempered victim. You moved away slightly, still holding the string and then pulled ... repeatedly causing the pebble to bang non-stop against the door, infuriating the victim. This was "tustet", a young person's weapon against those who berated them.





## SECRET DETOUR 13

Chemin de la Favorine is a magical, and unexpected, little passageway; to find it, walk up the path to the Promenade and then turn right into rue des Cavaliers. Next to the sculpture of an exiled knight - "Faydit" by Loïc Tellier, you'll find a quiet bench, where you can enjoy the view of the hills and Pyrénées, under the watchful gaze of a cat. A cypress tree stands guard over an abundance of irises, sage, lilacs and poppies.



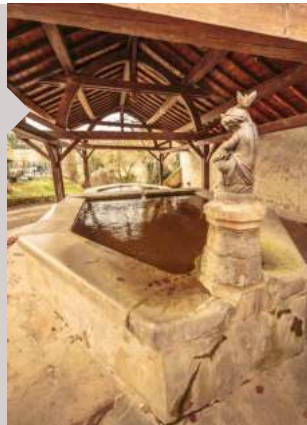
... At the end of this little detour, turn right towards the Crucifix where you'll find a path leading down towards the washhouse.

## THE WASH HOUSE 14

From the 18th century onwards, these two large tanks, arranged in a near-triangular formation, facing an angel, were an important focal point for women. It was a place of hard work but also freedom: where women could talk freely, sing and laugh, away from the men...

### Wash-free days

No washing was permitted during Easter Week nor on the feast day of Saint Agatha. The rest of the time, Wash Day, which in fact lasted for 2 or 3 days, happened once a month or even every 2-3 months. The first day, the laundry was loaded onto a cart and taken to the wash-house where it was soaped, beaten, twisted and rinsed. The next day, it was loaded into a large wash tub in the home and covered with a thick cloth which was, in turn, covered with a layer of ash obtained from vine shoots. Hot water was repeatedly poured onto the cloth: the ash helped restore whiteness and gave the linen a subtle scent. On the third day, the laundry was taken back to the wash-house for the final rinse.



## PUBLIC WEIGH HOUSE 15

This public structure, built in 1875, was frequently used to weigh vehicles and livestock. The small building houses an interactive model representing Fanjeaux in the Middle Ages. To obtain entry, enquire at the Tourist Office.

### Art work | The Inquisition

The inquisition was a process of investigation that developed over time, following on from the Crusade. The inquisition succeeded where force failed. Its strength: to break the bonds that united parents, children and friends, thanks to a system of denunciation. Repentance, the sole path to salvation, was only granted if those who confessed denounced others.



### Assistance

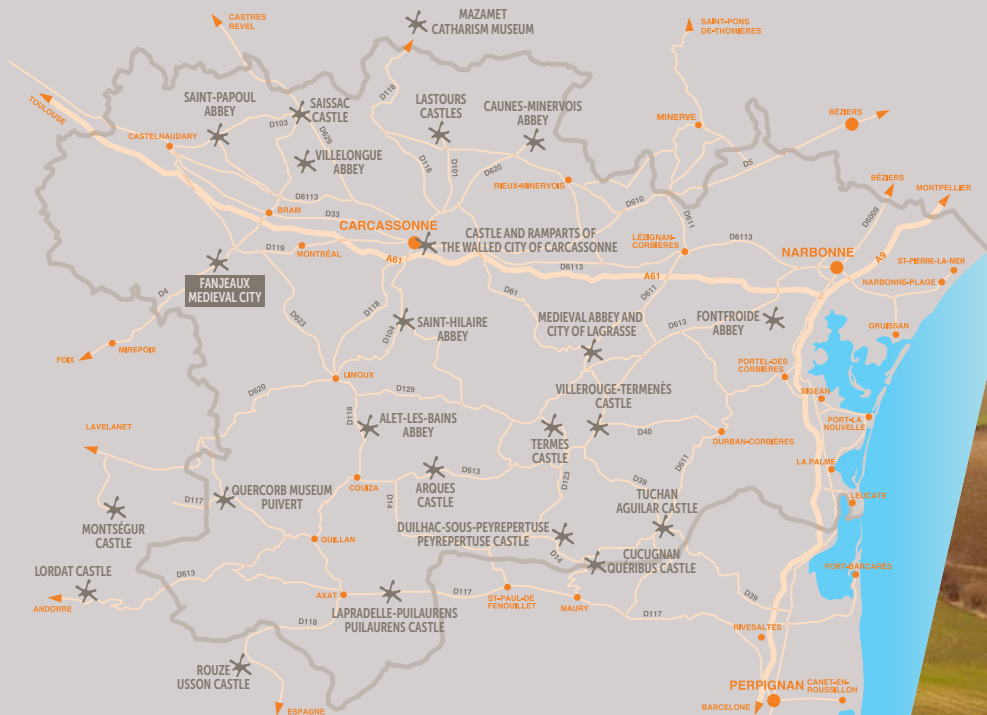
Fanjeaux's "Saint Roch" Benevolent Society, founded in 1861, helps people in need: helping the sick with farm work, providing emotional and material support, funerals etc. Members gather for an annual dance and procession on the 16th August, the feast day of Saint Roch. These Benevolent Societies were the one of earliest examples of social structures designed to help populations facing hardship.



## NEARBY

This is a region where nature delights the senses and history enlivens the mind. The themed walks, all around Fanjeaux, are a great way of exploring the area. One of them, near Fanjeaux, offers a chance to immerse yourself in the history of the small village of Laurac, a powerful Seigneurial estate in the Middle Ages, which gave its name to the Lauragais region. Another, more spiritual walk, heads down towards Prouilhe, a site associated with Dominic and his disciples. In Montréal, at the point where the Mediterranean and Ocean weather systems merge, you'll find a botanical trail where you can discover the flora unique to the Malepère mountain range ... Map and directions available from Fanjeaux Tourist Office.

# PRACTICAL INFORMATION



## GOOD PRACTICES

Pets permitted (on a leash)



## SERVICES

### TOILETS

Public toilets opposite the Tourist Office.



### PARKING

Free car parks in the village.



### ATMs (Crédit Agricole only)

Place du Treil



## INTERCOMMUNAL TOURICE OFFICE

In the heart of the Cathar Hills

6 place du Treil - 11270 FANJEAUX

+33 (0)4 68 24 75 45



[payscathare.org](http://payscathare.org) | [collinescathares.com](http://collinescathares.com) | [fanjeaux.com](http://fanjeaux.com)

Contact: +33 (0)4 68 24 75 45 - Emergencies 112

[@tourismelauragais](https://www.facebook.com/tourismelauragais)