

LES
SITES



PAYS CATHARE



QUÉRIBUS

CASTEL

T O U R G U I D E



QUÉRIBUS CASTLE

THIS VISITOR COMPANION
BEEN DESIGNED TO HELP YOU EXPLORE
THE SITE AT QUÉRIBUS: THE CASTLE
ITSELF, THE VILLAGE AND ALSO SOME
NATURAL BEAUTY SPOTS. IT WILL SHOW
YOU ALL OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL AND
INTERESTING SPOTS...

AND FOR THOSE CURIOUS TO SEE AND FIND
OUT MORE, YOU WILL FIND VARIOUS OTHER
TOOLS AT YOUR DISPOSAL




0 10 m



Legende

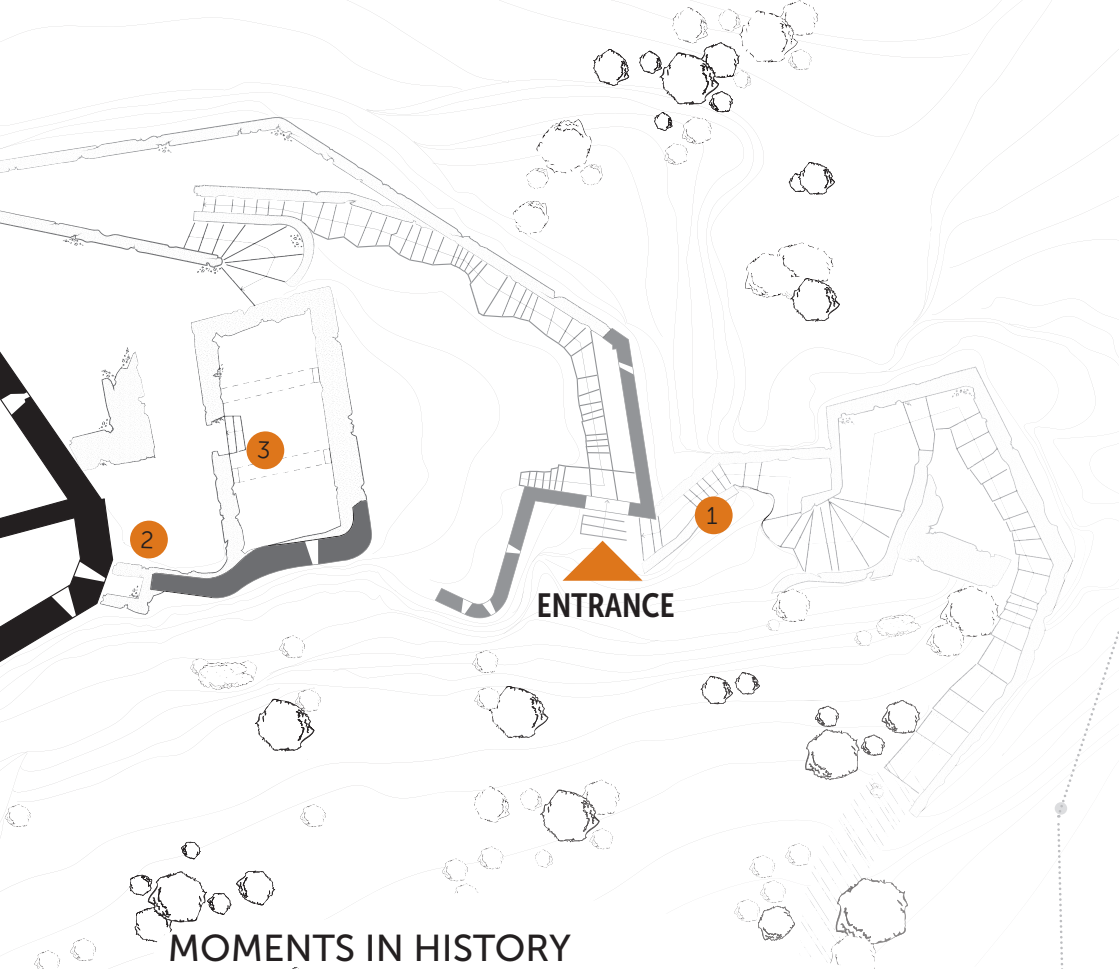
 Stonewall remains

 Stonewall ruins

 Stonework ceiling
features (arches, rib
vaulting, etc.)



Plan : ©R. Martin, L. Bayrou/CAML
Graphic adaptation : Le Passe muraille



MOMENTS IN HISTORY

And so it came to pass that this Aragon castle in the south of the French kingdom would be razed to the ground. Fearing his own death, Chabert de Barbaira was forced to surrender, relinquishing the Quéribus Castle in exchange for his freedom. And so the siege began. His castle, the last refuge for the Faydit lords and Cathars, remained standing nonetheless. It was Olivier de Termes, once Chabert's friend turned mortal enemy, that captured him, putting an end to the resistance. With the sergeants of the new garrison already assembled, and the King's engineers mobilised: the refortified castle would soon launch a monumental battle on the Occitane bow, now facing Aragon...

+ DETAILS ON
www.payscathare.org





THE FORTRESS

STRATEGIC DEFENCES

Huge and impressive, the fortress of Quéribus sits atop a rocky crest 729 metres in height. The pathway to get there is easy and climbs gently, open to the sun and the spectacular countryside, until the first defences are reached. It was here that the King's engineers added their powerful fortifications to Chabert de Barbaira's castle, which had remained thus far unbreached.

+ Comprehension

When Chabert de Barbaira surrendered, the Quéribus Castle passed from Aragon hands to the hands of the French. The Castle itself is a strategic point which overlooks one of the rare passages to the Corbières mountains: the Grau de Maury, which is visible from the path. You have to imagine that in times gone by, not so very long ago, established roads were rare, and passage through the gorges was impossible.



👁 Observation

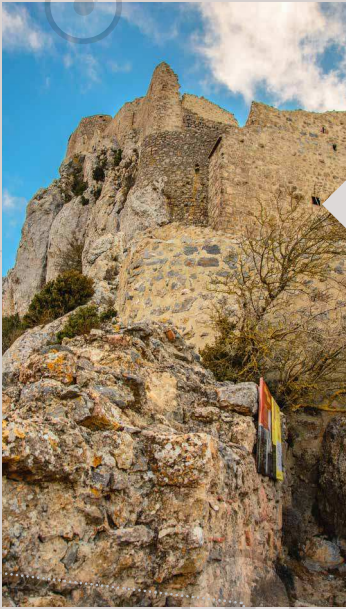
The fortress that stands before us today has changed a lot in appearance with the passage of time. The small castle built up upon itself on top of the mountain in the time of Chabert de Barbaira, has been transformed, thanks to the King of France's engineers, into an immense fortress, with two and later three sets of ramparts spread out on the ridge. Impenetrable, it had become practically invincible, until the 15th Century. Louis XI, ignoring the 1258 peace treaty of Corbeil, occupied Perpignan and Roussillon. The Aragon people came to liberate the towns, taking back Quéribus at the same time. The castle would come back into French hands two years later, in 1475. It then had to be adapted to withstand new artillery techniques.

WITHOUT BLOODSHED

1254. Saint Louis, returning from the crusades of the Orient, called upon the services of Pierre d'Auteuil Sénéchal de Carcassonne. He was tasked to eradicate the last bastion of resistance held by Chabert de Barbaira; the Quéribus Castle. The siege was planned in 1255. But it was expensive and difficult to get under way... Sénéchal asked the Archbishop of Narbonne for assistance. From that point, the story is clouded in mystery. It would seem that Olivier de Termes, who fought on the side of the French, was called to help, and that he found a way to capture Chabert, his former brother-in-arms. And so it was that Chabert found himself incarcerated in the Carcassonne royal prison and was forced to relinquish Quéribus in exchange for his freedom...

+ Comprehension

Quéribus itself is mentioned for the first time in the 11th Century. It was at that time part of the Perapertusès, under the control of the counts of Besalù, who, during the 12th Century, rejoined allegiance with Barcelona. It was then a Catalan castle of lords before becoming a French royal fortress at the time of the Crusade against the Albigensians. The castle was noting to do with Catharism, except that it was one of their last refuges...



THE OUTER WALLS

A PLACE OF GREAT IMPORTANCE

From one set of ramparts to the next, Quéribus displays the layout of a strategic fortress, regularly adapted to military requirements. The parts dating back to the Middle Ages have become entangled with those of the Renaissance period, forming a collection of uniform structures that would guarantee the strength of defences and a quality of life within this bleak mountain-top place of refuge.

Access 1

The fortress was reached by a winding staircase which led to a veritable trap for any potential assailant: Three consecutive doors, in a quincunx arrangement. Lethal vents opened on every side housing cannons and soldiers ready to kill. Escape was impossible. And even if against all odds the enemy managed to get past the doors, they would reach a chamber at the castle gates surrounded by ramparts circling around it from which projectiles could be thrown down. Further reinforced by its rocky walls, few soldiers were needed to defend such a secure access point...



Observation

Along the first wall of the lowest ramparts, 15th and 16th Century builders used an amusing material to decorate the walls: stone cannonballs, which had become innocuous in a time of gunpowder and light artillery...



FINAL REFUGE

Long after the end of the crusade, and after Montségur had been taken, Quéribus served as a refuge for heretics and *Faydits* lords, that is, all those dispossessed for their heretic ways. Benoît de Termes, Cathar bishop of Razès died there in 1241. In 1255, just before it was taken, the castle became a refuge for yet more Cathars, whose ultimate fate is unknown...

la deuxième enceinte 2

The ruins of a barracks and a water tank can be found in the second set of ramparts. The barracks 3 is a rectangular building with large living quarters. While Saint Louis had command of Quéribus, he installed a garrison of 20 to 25 soldiers, only for the garrison to fall to a dozen soldiers soon afterwards in the 13th Century.

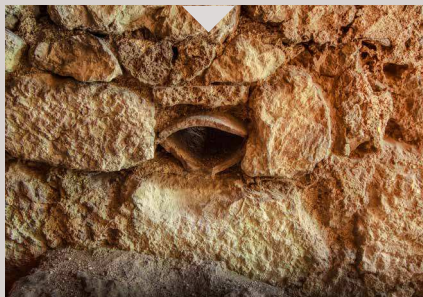
The third enclosure 4

When passing through the doors of the third enclosure 5, you reach the store-room, a long room with vaulted ceiling, designed for holding supplies. Above this room, on a second floor, a room covered with ancient clay tiles contains the ruins of an oven and chimney. Next to the store-room, the governor's lodgings rise up over three floors.



+ Comprehension 6

Quéribus had a system of cascading water tanks, feeding each enclosure. Here, within the store-room, a guard room sits over a large water tank, capable of holding 60,000 litres of water, enough to fill a swimming pool... It was fed by rainwater collected from the roof. The tiles overhanging the walls acted as a channelling system from which water would pour.



👁 Observer

The third enclosure which houses the keep and the governor's lodgings was by far the most important. A staircase of large steps takes you there. What attracts the eye is not so much the impressive door mounted on a parapet that we come across, but the sumptuous countryside views.



👁 Observation

Whether from inside or outside of the keep, you can see the ruins of Chabert's keep at the point where stone meets rock: the stones there are smaller and more rudimentary.



THE KEEP ⁷

THE HEART OF THE CASTLE

As if emerging up from the rocks, Quéribus's keep is noticeable from afar. It existed from the time of Chabert de Barbaire, but has been remodelled many times during the passage of the centuries. It was without doubt even taller during the time of Louis IX: in order to adapt to the arrival of portable artillery its height was lowered and its walls were thickened. On the inside, the "pillar room" is another example of ingenious adaptation...

Observation

A wide defenceless window is situated next to a small door leading to the void... this is quite surprising considering the location of both on the side of the keep. The large window belongs to an era when danger was more important. As for the small door, even older still, it would have certainly led out onto defensive wooden structures, like hoardings.



Comprehension



The Quéribus keep is dominated by the rock that sits opposite. It is its main point of vulnerability. As artillery evolved, enabling better mobility and more accurate shots, the keep had to be modified. The old keep was enclosed in the thick shell that we see today, and a platform was built to house cannons, creating a casemate facing the rock in order to defend against any attack.

Comprehension

This room with vaulted ceilings is not a chapel. In reality it is two rooms built upon one another: one corresponding with the lower room of Chabert de Barbaire's keep, and above it, originally separated by floorboards, the impressive room known as the "pillar room". It is a remarkable example of Medieval technology. Each set of four crossed arches meets at the point of the enormous central pillar, with the weight being distributed among them, making the structure near indestructible.



THE PLATFORM OF THE KEEP

From the last foothills of the Corbières to the Albères and the Pyrenees mountain ranges, to the Fenouillèdes coastline, the views encompass the whole of the Roussillon plain. You can imagine the ancient border between the French kingdom and Aragon which passed between Quéribus and the Tautavel tower, and between Maury and Estagel.

CUCUGNAN VILLAGE

INTERESTING FACTS

HISTORY

In Cucugnan, the higher you climb towards the top of the village, the further into the past you step. First cited in the 12th Century, a collection of houses were remodelled to form a fortified group at the top of the rock. This was the feudal age, which saw a rise in the number of castles and keeps, around which the population was "invited" to come to settle... In the 15th Century, a Spanish raid completely destroyed the village. The modern Cucugnan was built, a little lower down, at the foot of the Medieval ruins.



A FORTIFIED ENTRANCE

The new village seems to have benefited from new ramparts. Today there is only one example of its remains: an attractive fortified gateway of 16th Century construction, visible when accessing the car park from Rue du Presbytère, before reaching the church.

THE VIRGIN WITH CHILD

In the Saint-Julien et Sainte-Basillisse church is a rare treasure of the 17th Century: a gilded wooden statue of the Virgin with child. This is a rare example due to its being banned by the Council of Trent. This Virgin has seen many adventures: she had to be hidden so as not to be destroyed; was concealed away, and later rediscovered. Here she is today, under the guard of those that come to admire her...



CUCUGNAN IN THE LANGUEDOC REGION

The famous French novel "Le Curé de Cucugnan" is a story about the Languedoc region and not Provence. It was told in Corbières, passing by word of mouth from generation to generation, before being committed to writing. Various famous authors have put their own take on the story such as J.Roumanille, A. Daudet, A. Mir and H. Gougaud...

THE STREETS



IMPASSE DE LA TOURETTE

From the church, the Impasse de la Tourette leads down to the Place de la Fontaine.

At the start of this street on the right, the houses are among the oldest in the village, without doubt dating back to the 15th and 16th Centuries.

LA PLACE DE LA FONTAINE

Former stables as well as an inn border this square. It seems that it was once a refuge for the post horses of the 17th Century. Lower down on the right hand side are some narrow facades which give us an idea of what traditional dwellings of the 17th Century were like: on the ground floor, a kitchen, on the first floor, a bedroom and above it, an attic. Lower down on the Rue de l'Auberge, on the right, is a charming house with an orange-coloured facade: the theatre...



THÉÂTRE ACHILLE MIR

This small and modern theatre has two shows: A documentary called "The Keys to Quéribus" complements a visit to the castle with images of the monument filmed by drones complete with audio commentary.

An animated film which tells the story of the "Sermon du Curé de Cucugnan" according to the priest himself, which follows the version made famous by author Alphonse Daudet in 1866.

VILLAGE LIFE

FOUNTAINS

Water is essential for a village, as well as a castle.

Cucugnan has an old fountain, located low down and close to the river, where its source can be found. The people of Cucugnan, or more likely, its women, went there to fetch water. They took a path called the *Rampaillou*, meaning "ramp" in French, being a very steep place which still exists today. Climbing back up whilst carrying water would have been exhausting. One of the villagers tells the story of how her grandmother wept with joy when the fountain was built higher up in the village at the end of the 19th Century...



THE WINDMILL

The Moulin d'Omer is a 17th Century building which has been completely restored and is open to the public. Close by is the famous Boulangerie des Maîtres, run by the windmill. There you will find high-quality flour, bread and cakes, all made in the traditional way. People come from far and wide to sample its produce...

THE GOOD LIFE

The village has developed a culture of living well through the output of its craftsmen, and an approach which favours quality, local, and organic produce. An example of such a local artisan craft would be, a range of stationery illustrated with watercolours of the castle, printed on paper made at the Moulin de Brousses in the Montagne Noire... Another example is a booklet about flowers, created by two villagers...



MEDIEVAL RUINS

In the higher parts of the village, the ruins of a building and water tank bordered by a fortified wall indicates the presence of an old Medieval castle. On the other side, the cliff provides a defence for the village...

VINEYARDS

Cucugnan became a wealthy place as a result of the dawn of wine production. Before then, the village survived on the growing of cereal crops in unsuitable soil conditions, and goat-rearing. This new prosperity didn't suffer too much during the phylloxera epidemic which decimated the region's vines at the end of the 19th Century. By the time it reached this isolated place, a solution to the blight had already been found...



NEARBY



THE CATHAR TRAIL (GR® 367)

The Cathar trail runs along the foot of the castle. Walkers can enjoy sumptuous countryside views from the sea all the way to Foix.



THE FOUNTAIN TRAIL (45 MINUTES - EASY)

Accessible from the village, at the foot of the *Rampailou*, this trail allows you to explore the village and its rich landscapes.



CUCUGNAN TO QUÉRIBUS ROUND TRIP (3HRS - EXPERIENCED WALKERS)

A pleasant walk passing through scrubland and holm oaks linking the village with the castle.



LES
CITADEL-
LES DU
VERTIGE
HERITAGE POUR
L'UNESCO

ON THE WAY TO UNESCO!

In the 13th century, at the end of the Crusade against the Albigenses, the power of the King of France was asserted in our newly conquered region. For the first time, a coherent system of defence was set up for the entire territory to face an enemy: Aragon. Peyrepertuse, Puilaurens, Termes, Quéribus, Aguilar, Lastours, and Montségur (Ariège) made up a line of invincible fortresses coordinated by the Seneschal of Carcassonne. A new, central defensive system where the citadel of Carcassonne was the headquarters. A spectacular architectural feat in the city and in these ridge-top castles blending into the rocks. Lastly, totally preserved landscapes and exceptional panoramic views. These are the main arguments put forward in the application for inscription as a UNESCO World Heritage site.

You can support this application at this website citadellesduvertige.aude.fr

EN PRATIQUE



GOOD PRACTICES



Sturdy walking shoes

Pets welcome

SERVICES



TOILETS

Public toilets can be found at the castle and in the village.



PARKING

Free parking is available at the castle and the entrance to the village.



SHOP

Gift shops are located at the castle and also the Achille Mir theatre.



TOURISM OFFICE des Corbières Sauvages

2 route de Duilhac - 11350 Cucugnan

+33 4 68 45 69 40



www.payscathare.org | citadellesduvertige.aude.fr | www.cucugnan.fr

Contact: +33 4 68 45 03 69

