

CITY TOUR MAP

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• Respect nature: take a bag to carry away your
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• Respect the local population: the trails are
closed to motor vehicles. Keep dogs on a lead.
Respect private property.



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Coeur Sud-Ouest
Mariage, Mariage & Mariage

BONNE VISITE

CITY TOUR



Distance : 1.5 km

Difficulty : easy

1h00

Take a stroll through Riscle, with its narrow streets, wash-
houses, church and medieval pouterles, along the canals
that lead down to the Adour.



1 Departure from the tourist office

Note the pebbles rolled by the Adour River, which have been the main building material over the centuries.

2 Rue de la Carderie

Rue la Carderie (Cardery street) takes its name from the craft activity that took place there. The private mill, located further on, was used in the 16th century to card wool. This is where you'll find Riscle's main accessory for craft activities: the fuller. It is a large oak barrel, around 3 metres in diameter, capable of rotating on a horizontal axis. Water from the canal is fed into it to tan the hides.



3 The Estret passage

The narrowness of the alleyway, as the name "Estret" suggests (narrow passage), would confirm its existence in the Middle Ages. At that time, the Rieurtort (a small stream) and the canal were still flowing above ground. Today, some of them run under the houses.

Place René Assin

Facing you is the church, and to its left is the old water mill (a private residence) fed by a canal that runs under the road. For a long time, the canal served as a sewage system, while the present-day town hall was used as the local school.

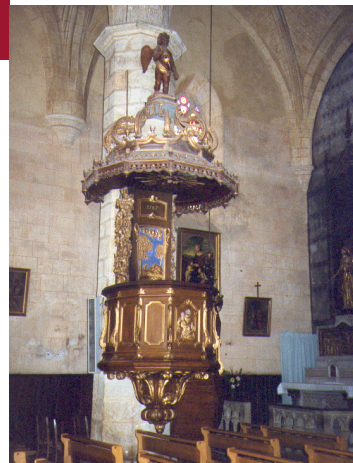
4 Rue Sainte-Marie

The Rue Sainte-Marie was formerly the main street of Riscle. You are now inside where the old city walls once stood. In the 16th century, the presbytery and school were located in this street. It was the heart of the medieval town: you can imagine it teeming with life and activity. The tanneries and dye works were located here.

At the end of rue Sainte-Marie, turn right into avenue de l'Adour. On the left-hand pavement: rue des remparts. As its name suggests, this is the exact location of the old fortifications.

Rue du Sisquet

The word "Sisquet" comes from the Gascon word "Chisquet", which means "alarm call". Rue du Sisquet is thought to have been the old



10 Rue de la Pitarolle

At the bottom of the alley, at number 2, is the old church dungeon. The wall on the left is a remnant of the old inner wall that protected the castelnau.

11 Place de la Libération

In the 15th century, one of the city gates, the Porte du Bordalat, stood at the intersection of the square and the rue du centre. The Riscle covered market hall is located on the site of the former Saint Jean hospital.

In 1461, an edict from King Louis XI ordered the construction of a hospital or hospice in every town in the kingdom to receive pilgrims, travellers and the sick. In Riscle, the Hospitallers of Saint John were asked to run the hospital. This order had its origins in the Crusades and was founded in Jerusalem in the 11th century under the name of the Hospitallers of Saint John. After the French Revolution, they changed their name to the Knights of Malta. These monks obeyed a precise set of rules and a supreme leader, the Grand Prior, and were divided into commanderies, priories and bailiwicks. They gave hospitality to the sick and welcomed passing pilgrims.

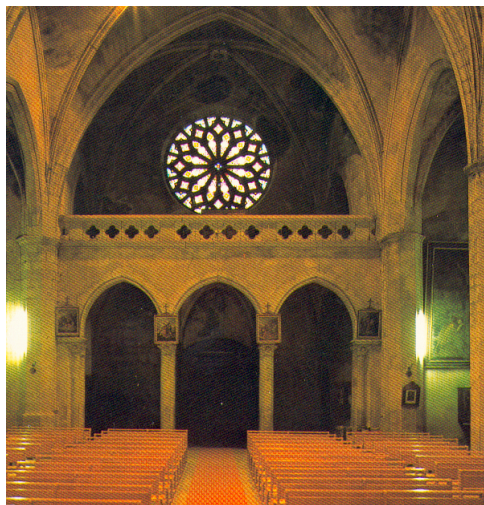
In 1682, an epidemic of the Black Death decimated Riscle. The Knights put themselves at the service of the population, even going so far as to treat those suffering from the plague in their own homes. In the communal prison, which was turned into a hospital for the occasion, the monks of Saint-Jean kept all those who arrived in Riscle under observation for 20 days. After the Revolution, the hospitals became the property of the nation and some were sold off. No one knows today when the hospital was finally destroyed.

Back to the Tourist Office .

- The high altar in Angoulême stone replaced a wooden altar from the 16th century. It is decorated with a dozen ogival niches in which the twelve apostles are depicted, holding the objects of their torture. Below the altar are allegories of the four evangelists (Matthew and the angel, Mark and the lion, Luke and the bull, John and the eagle).
- The tabernacle, closed by a small, gilded door on which is carved the Paschal Lamb, explains the painting in the upper stained glass window at the top of the altar: Saint Peter receiving the keys as a symbol of the responsibility of the Church of which he is the patron.
- The window on the right is dedicated to him and the one on the left to St Paul, each representing important moments in their lives.
- Two paintings at the back represent the Crucifixion and Saint Matthew the Evangelist. Their original place is behind the high altar.
- To the right and left of the altar, among the paintings on the wall, are the coats of arms of the towns of Riscle and Auch.
- The choir is surrounded by the local stone altarpiece, in the ogival style, installed after the French Revolution.
- There are statues of Joan of Arc and Notre-Dame des Victoires on the pillars.
- The pulpit was carved in oak in 1767 by the same craftsman as the one in Auch. It depicts Saint Peter on his knees, begging the Lord's forgiveness for having denied him.

On the lower left is the altar of the Virgin Mary. This gilded wooden statue of the Virgin Mary holding the baby Jesus was made in 1638. Legend has it that it was a gift from Queen Anne of Austria, wife of Louis XIII, in gratitude for fulfilling her vow to give the Kingdom of France a male heir. She was on a pilgrimage that took her through the town of Riscle.

- The right aisle contains the altar of Saint Joseph, illuminated by a stained-glass window depicting the Holy Family. Next to the confessional is the tombstone of Abbé Joseph Larrieu, parish priest of Riscle in the 19th century. Nearby, the statue of Saint-Antoine de Padoue watches over the faith of the people of Riscle.
- For security reasons, the bell tower is no longer accessible. The smallest of its three bells comes from the former Convent of the Divine Mercy.



5 The Convent of Mercy

The Order of Saint Mary of Mercy was founded in Spain in the 12th century. The friars wore white robes and black cloaks, a cross on their chest and a rope belt with three large knots, symbolising their mission: to untie the bonds of prisoners. They were particularly dedicated to freeing Christian slaves, even pledging themselves as collateral for slaves they could not otherwise free. These fathers soon became victims of aggression and some left to settle in neighbouring countries. Thus, in 1235, the Mercian Fathers from Pamplona settled in Riscle and took three years to build a convent in the old part of the town. The Mercian Fathers spent their time in prayer and tilling their land. Their rule was very austere, but this did not mean they were cloistered. From time to time, they would preach in place of absent priests. They also had a passion for teaching Latin and theology to young children preparing for religious life. Finally, like many other orders, they offered board and lodging to foreigners who asked for it.



Although all the documents were destroyed in the 16th century, oral tradition makes it possible to trace the location of the various rooms in the monastery. The refectory and kitchen were on the ground floor, with the study opposite. On the first floor were the dormitory and the cell of the superior. In the north-west corner of the building was the chapel before it was destroyed by Protestant soldiers in 1569. During the Wars of Religion, the Mercian Fathers of Riscle were massacred by the Huguenots and thrown alive into the monastery well, which was covered by a large stone. The convent was later rebuilt and converted into a bourgeois residence. In 1793, the Convention confiscated it as national property before transforming it into a stud farm. Today, the Renaissance gate and the 16th century buildings remain. Part of the 13th century curtain wall is still visible.



6 Place de la volaille (Poultry square)

As it was called until the middle of the last century, this was the place where the famous Riscle poultry was sold, attracting the local population.

Rue du canal

Follow the line of the old ramparts and walk through the ditches of the old town. In front of you, the hill, and the site of the old castle.

7 The Bouscassé Canal

The canal was dug in 1560 by order of the Lords of Rochoire, who lived in the castle of Saint Martin d'Armagnac. At that time, the purpose of the canal was to power the mill and the wash-house and to supply water to the inhabitants of the town. Together with the water from the Rieutort, it filled the moats and protected the town from external attacks. On the other side, the canal flows under the mill, of which only the lower part is original (15th century). The mill was located inside the fortifications. At that time, wheat and oats were dried on the vaults of the church.

8 Place de l'Eglise

Coming out of the Poustrele (narrow medieval street), you will find yourself in the square that was the heart of the fortified town. On the left is the site of the old castle, which was destroyed in the last century. All that remains of it is the column on the corner of number 11 in "la rue du chateau".

It was the base of the portico of the Count's Castle, which had fallen victim to the erosion of time. The Counts and Dukes of Armagnac used to go there to manage the affairs of the region.

9 The Saint-Pierre Church

The church of Saint Pierre de Riscle, listed since 1974, stands on a plateau overlooking the present town.

Its strategic elevated position protects it from the floods of the Adour and from potential invaders. In fact, in the Middle Ages, as well as being a place of worship and assembly, it had another essential purpose: to protect the inhabitants. In the Middle Ages, as well as being a place of worship and assembly, the church also had the essential role of protecting its inhabitants. A primitive church is mentioned as early as the 2nd century in a register of the chapter of Auch.

In the 12th century, this building was replaced by a larger and stronger structure: its conical bell tower is reminiscent of early Romanesque churches, while its western façade and ogive are Gothic. This means that its style marks the transition between Romanesque and Gothic art. In the Middle Ages it was a veritable fortress, with thick walls pierced with loopholes, the only openings being the two entrance doors, the outer door and the windows of the sacristy and the ridge turret. The building, which had both a religious and a military purpose, also had dungeons in the retaining walls of the main staircase leading to the porch.

In 1579, the Protestant knight Montgomery set about destroying the church. Fortunately, the townspeople had reinforced it and only the roof was damaged, which was quickly repaired.

The Outside : The lower north-western Romanesque section dates back to the 11th or 12th century. The facade of the church is divided into three distinct parts: to the right and left, two square towers intended for the defence of the church, the fortified castle, and the town.

The one on the left is equipped with loopholes and ends in a 4-sloped roof like the 14th century towers. The one on the right has no roof but has an ogival bay later than the primitive church. The right tower is supported on the south side by the nave walls. There is a modern ogival doorway between the two towers. Between the cornice and the clock, stands a beautiful Gothic rose window. The Gothic entrance door features columns with capitals surmounted by serrated gables. The tympanum is decorated with an episode from the life of Saint Dominic: the Virgin Mary gives him a rosary while pledging to drive the Albigensian heretics from the kingdom of France. The porch of the church housed the statue of Saint Catherine before it was broken and lost during the Revolution in 1793.

Northern side : This side shows traces of the walls of the early Romanesque church. The buttresses were replaced in the Gothic period. Between the 2nd and 3rd northern buttresses, under an ogival window, there is a modern Gothic door. After the 3rd buttress, there is a wall with loopholes, which hides one of the five sections of the current radiating chapel.

Southern side:

This side bears traces of the original Romanesque church, but still has the characteristics of 14th and 15th century Gothic churches: three Gothic ogival windows and three Romanesque-inspired buttresses. Bones have been found on this side of the church, suggesting that this was the site of the medieval town's cemetery.

The inside :

Built on a three-nave plan, the first thing you notice is the height of its vaults. Built in the Romanesque style, the church is made up of arches that meet and are supported by large internal pillars and external buttresses. The vaults were rebuilt in the 19th century. The bays of these three vaults, the mullion and the stained-glass windows bear the imprint of the ogive, at the time of the transition from Romanesque to Gothic. The interior of the church was completely restored between 1830 and 1880.

