

12 Rue Galiot de Genouillac



Jacques "Galiot" de Genouillac lord of Assier, seneschal of the Quercy and Master of Artillery to King François 1st was appointed governor of the Languedoc in 1546. He was an important person and owned the feudal castle in Capdenac. His daughter brought the Protestant faith to Capdenac and ensured the town as a stronghold for the reformed religion after the edict of Nantes.

The street on the right, rue du Sault, will take you to Place Sully ...

13 La Maison Sully

This manor house was built here in the 18th century on the site of the feudal castle occupied successively by Saint Géraud, Galliot de Genouillac's family and the Duke de Sully.



On the left just past the manor house

14 Eglise Saint Jean-Baptiste



The church today dates from the 18th century. The religious wars had destroyed the original church situated here, it was rebuilt in 1722. The entrance porch with its triangular pediment and the statue of Saint John the Baptist illustrates the classical style. The reredos behind the altar is a fine example of the Baroque spirit of the Catholic reform. In the Saint Géraud chapel on the left there is a modern statue of the saint holding the town of Capdenac.

Cross over the square to the house on the left of the hotel.

15 Medieval Garden

You can visit the medieval garden on the theme of the five senses.

Cross the place to reach ...

16 La Mairie : former Council House

The councillors met in a house in town. Tradition has it that it was situated opposite the Modon tower so it may be the building that is today the Town Hall. The 17th century classical doorway was removed from Sully's manor in 1696. There are remains of earlier gothic style arched windows.



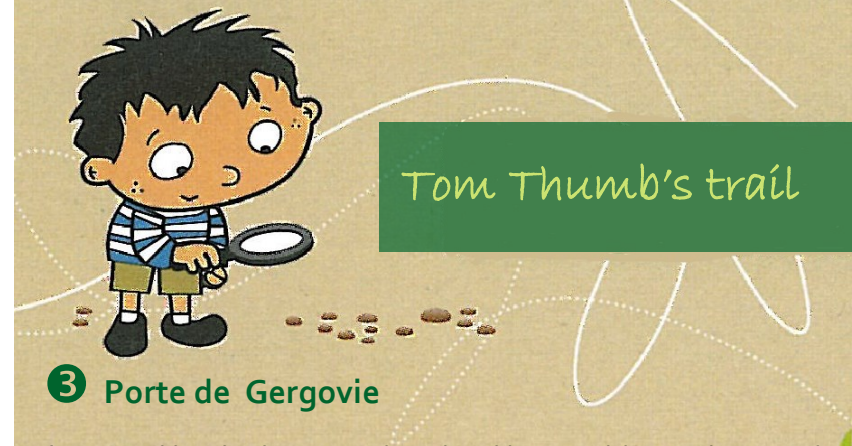
Leave the village by the road to Figeac

17 "Fontaine Gauloise" and "Fontaine de César"

Below the village, beyond the walls are two basins fed by a spring. The "Gauloise" spring is hollowed out of the rock. Today dried up, it supplied a well rediscovered in 1816 by the Champollion brothers. The second basin called "Caesar's spring" is covered by a stone vault and was probably dedicated to St John the Baptist in the 13th and 14th centuries.



This is the end of the discovery trail. Thank you for visiting Capdenac-le-Haut.



3 Porte de Gergovie

Just past this ruined gateway there is a big stone lying on the ground. What shape is it and where do you think it came from?

Answer

4 Rue de la Peyrolierie

In the triangular pediment above a door in this street is a circle with a strange symbol inside. What do you think it represents?

Answer

8 Porte Narbonnaise

Beside the gateway there are some stones jutting out from the wall. Why do you think they were there?

Answer

14 Eglise Saint Jean Baptiste

The devil is portrayed here. Can you find him?

Answer

The shape is a heart. It was found in the river Lot and brought here to decorate the entrance to the village. It represents a cross on a tripod surrounded by the sun's rays and a crown of leaves. They were the steps up to the ramparts that enabled the guards to defend town. He is at the back of the church, above the door but he is smiling and does not look very evil.

Answers :

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The keys of ...
Capdenac-le-Haut

Discovery trail

the keys to Capdenac le Haut...



The ancient town of Capdenac, built on a rocky outcrop, overlooks a meander of the river Lot.

The earliest traces of human presence on this site go back to Prehistoric times and it was used as a fortified site by the Gauls. It was once thought to be the site of the Gauls' last stand against the Roman army of Julius Caesar – Uxellodunum.

Throughout the Middle Ages Capdenac was a prosperous town with a busy river port.

During the Hundred Year's War Capdenac's fortifications resisted the English troops, until the whole of the Quercy came under the rule of Edward 3rd in 1360.

The town suffered during the religious wars of the 16th century when Protestant troops found refuge here.

At the beginning of the 17th century the Comte d'Orval, son of the Duc de Sully who was minister to King Henry 4th, occupied the position of governor of the town.

The town's history changed in the 19th century when the advent of the railway brought industrialisation to the region. From then on economic and urban development gave an advantage to the valley creating the town of Capdenac Gare.

From this vantage point travel back in time along the winding streets of this charming old town.

1 Le donjon - Tour de Modon

Start from outside the Tourist Office

This square keep was probably built in the 13th century. It never served as residence to the local lord but was part of the town's military defence system, housing the garrison and the guards' room. It was the central point in Capdenac's defence system commanding both the town and the surrounding countryside. Today the Tourist Office occupies the ground floor and there is a splendid view from the terrace at the top.



Leave the square on the left by the road that passes in front of the dovecot.



2 Le Pigeonnier

These dovecots are a symbol of rural architecture in the Quercy, common as a feature of the farmhouse or free standing in the fields. Pigeons occupied the upper floor. This one is an example of the late 18th or early 19th century.

Carry on down to the remains of a fortified gateway

3 La porte de Gergovie

Here were the essential elements of the town's defence, controlling the only easy access to the town : a succession of five gateways including a formidable barbican (remains still visible). The moats have been filled in and the drawbridges removed, replaced today by a public garden from where there is a good view of the valley.



4 Rue de la Peyrolierie



The name of this street comes from the craftsmen who worked here making copper pans and other utensils. This is one of the main streets in the town and some of the houses have retained elements of former times : shops and craftsmen's workshops. It follows the ancient Roman road from Rodez to Limoges, a route used by merchants from the 12th to the 18th centuries as they brought cattle and cloth from the Auvergne region or products from the Mediterranean (fruit, spices, medicinal plants and dyes...)

Turn left into rue Dr Cipièrre which takes you to Place St Andrieu.



5 Place Saint Andrieu

A former church situated here gives its name to this terrace. The church of Saint André was destroyed during the religious wars of the 16th century. The view from the terrace offers a panorama of the valley where Capdenac Gare was created in the 19th century. Steps cut into the cliff face take you down to the spring called "la fontaine des Anglais".

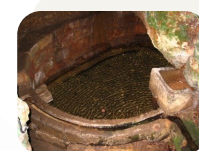


You can get from the Tourist Office the access code to the door leading to the 130 steps down to spring.

6 La fontaine dite "des Anglais"

The spring consists of two medieval stone built basins, a first oval basin lined with lead and a second rectangular basin which collect the water from a spring 120m above the river Lot. Access to the spring is protected by a thick stone wall.

Walk back up the steps, leaving the terrace by the steps leading down to the "chemin des Gardes".



7 L'hôpital

In the 14th and 15th centuries there was a hospital in Capdenac, most probably situated at the tip of the promontory near the southern entrance to the town. A leper-house would have been situated outside the town walls. Both have disappeared today.

Follow the street down on the left to the second remaining fortified gateway.

8 Porte Vigane or "Narbonnaise"

This gateway is situated on the route from the south which comes up from the Lot valley at the hamlet of Vic (giving the gateway its name "Vigane"). The base of a medieval tower, visible just past the gateway, could be where important documents, religious relics and church ornaments were kept.

Walk back up to the village.

9 La Maison des Gardes

This big medieval building, traditionally called "la Commanderie" and which has given its name to the street, has undergone several transformations. Despite its military name, due to the proximity of the fortifications, it is an example of medieval civil architecture. On the first floor, in the town's library, you can still see elements of the 15th century mural decoration. From rue de la Commanderie turn right into rue St Géraud, notice the half-timbered house on the corner.



10 Rue Saint Géraud

Great grandson of Charlemagne, Géraud, Count of Aurillac, was born in 855. He is one of the few laymen to have been canonized. In the castle he had built in Capdenac a miracle took place : a man whose leg had been broken was cured after he had applied water the Count had washed his hands in.

Turn left in rue St Géraud to reach Place du Consulat.

Place du Consulat

At the end of the 13th century the town was governed by four councillors chosen from the population. The councillors were in charge of the town's seal : a disc representing on one side the town surmounted by a crenellated tower and two turrets, on the other side a man's head surrounded by the words "S Communitatis de Capdenacio" – a reminder of the importance of the town in the Middle Ages.

Cross the place du Consulat to the rue Arnaud de Capdenac and return to the main square turning on your left into....

