

BEAUX-CIEUX

THINGS TO DO (AND WHERE TO EAT...)

We suggest you visit this website: <http://www.tourisme-landesdarmagnac.fr/voir-faire>, although it is in French, it has the latest tourist information on the local area. Below, we've listed some other places further afield.

The Tourist Information in Labastide d'Armagnac (5 min away) has a wealth of information and leaflets.

We strongly recommend you check these locations on the internet before you travel to make sure they are opened! (especially when holidaying outside of July and August)

Beaches

In Les Landes

- **Mimizan** (1h15 min), better for young children as there often are paddling pools, very easy drive on quiet, straight roads, aim for the north beaches as the water there is clearer. If you take a right turn at the fair, a left turn just after the camping site and follow the picnic signs, you'll find a nice shaded car-park. The only downside is it's a bit of a walk down the beach to the town centre.
- **Moliets – Courant d'Huchet Beach** (NOT the main Moliets beach) – it is an unusual spot as the river Courant d'Huchet goes into the ocean at this spot. So one can swim in the ocean or in the current. Not as busy as the main beach – beware though, there are no life-guards and a bit of a walk from the car-park (go early)
- **Capbreton** (1h30 min) nice resort (Les Landes main harbour) with restaurants on the beach front, stony beach
- **Vieux-Boucau** (1h40 min), great sandy beach and breakers

Surfing

Hossegor is Europe's capital of surfing but the whole Côte Landaise (Biscarrosse, Vieux-Boucau, Mimizan, Moliets, Capbreton) also offers good surfing. All have hire shops and surf schools.

Recreational lakes

- **Lac de l'Uby** (Barbotan, 15 mins) : Leisure park on the shore of a 80,000m² reservoir, 260m fine sand beach, lifeguard supervised swimming, playground, large swimming pool with baby pool, spa, lagoon, shaded picnic areas, refreshments, water activities on the lake: pedalos, canoes, rowing, windsurfing, category 2 fishing
- **Lac de Clarens** (Casteljaloux, 35 min): beach, water-slides, pedalos, tree-top acrobatic, paint-ball, laser-tag. Very popular with some of our guests.

- **Montreal** (30 mins) : Leisure park with 250,000m² reservoir. Lifeguard supervised swimming, 130 metres fine sand beach. Refreshments, water toboggan, pontoon, ping-pong, volleyball, picnic areas.
- **Base de loisirs de Testarrouman**, Pissos (1h10), also archery, horse-riding, canoeing, top-tree acrobatics and cycling in the Parc Regional des Landes
- **Lac d'Arjuzanx** (1h10): the site is natural reserve with a small but nice beach, also pedalos and a walk around the lake.
- **Lake beaches** on the Atlantic Coast: The barrier of Dunes along the Atlantic coast has given birth to a series of lakes (*étangs*) linked together by rivers known as *Courrant*. They offer a safe alternative to the ocean, perfect for toddlers, with the added comfort of shady picnic areas. We recommend lakes of Cazaux & Sanguinet (Navarosse) or Parentis & Biscarrosse (both lakes near Biscarrosse), Léon or Soustons. These lakes are ideal locations for sailing and wind-surfing.

Canoeing

- **Lac de l'Uby**, Barbotan (8 km)
- River : **Roquefort** (20 km)
- **Base Nautique de Testarrouman**
- A bit further, in the **Parc Regional des Landes**, you can enjoy trips on the river Leyre. There are canoe centres 1h away in Trensacq, Commensacq, Pissos, Moustey, Sagnac-et-Muret and Belin-Beliet.
- **Lac de Léon**: From the lake in Léon, you can even canoe along the serene and shady Courant d'Huchet, which is a natural reserve (one of our favourites)
- Going towards Bazas, in Bernos-Beaulac, you can canoe on the **Ciron** through the Sauternes region.

Horse riding (see leaflets)

- **Betbezer** (5 min): ferme de l'Hestoc (advisable to book)
- **Barbotan**: lake (15 min): advisable to book
- **Gabarret** (10 min): "Etrier Gabardan" has a covered manège (English spoken)
- **Parc Regional des Landes**: If you fancy riding through the Parc, there are centres 1h away in Trensacq (www2.kitest.com, tel: 05 58 07 05 98), Pissos Also available, trips in carriages in Moustey and Luglon

Water park * Atlantic Parc: Seignosse (Hossegor 1h30-1h45)
Aqualand, Arcachon (2hrs)

Amusement Park * Walibi, Agen (1h10)

*Karting** Circuit Kart Drive, Mont-de-Marsan (30 mins) Outdoor track
Loisir Karting 47, Agen (1h20): Impressive karting track, but also
bouncy castle, quad circuit, electric car circuit and paint ball.

Accrobranche - tree-top acrobatic

- News aventures, St Pierre du Mont (40 mins)
- Base de loisirs de Testarrouman, Pissos (1h10)
- Adrenaline Parc, Moliets (1h30 - 1h45)
- Adventure Parc: Biscarosse (1h30- 1h45)

Fishing

- Lac de L'Uby, Barbotan (15 mins) category 2 fishing.
- Lac de Clarens, Casteljaloux (35 min)

Cycling (we have a couple of bikes for your use at the house)

- Closest Cycle Hire: Lac de l'Uby, Barbotan (15 mins)
- Within a few minutes of the house you'll find the **Voie Verte**, a dedicated 52km cycle path following the old railway line between Mont-de-Marsan and Gabarret, via the thermal town of Barbotan-Les-Thermes. On the way you'll find little scenes and signs telling the history of the sites. Between Mont-de-Marsan et Arthez, the Voie Verte is tarmaced and ideal for rollers.
- A bit further, in the Parc Regional des Landes, you can hire bikes and enjoy a ride in the shade of the pine trees, with plenty of interesting features, traditional villages, remote Hospitalier churches on the Santiago de Compostella pilgrim route, healing springs... there are hire centres in Pissos (1h10), Saugnac-et-Muret (1h20) and Belin-Beliet (1h30).

Walking

- There are many footpaths in the area, one going right past the house, but you might be tempted to follow the path of the pilgrims on their way to Compostelle. The house is situated half-way between the Via Podiensis (Chemin du Puy), past Montreal, and the Via Lemovicencis (Chemin de Vézélais), past Roquefort. You can take your pick.
- In the Parc Regional des Landes, you can enjoy many shady walks in the forest. We recommend one leaving from Saugnac past mills, a healing spring and an ancient chapel.

Mini-Golf

Gabarret (10 mins): Mini Golf 18-hole, open to all public afternoons and evenings -
Tél. 05 58 44 31 67

Golf

- Golf de Mont-de-Marsan (25 mins) - Pessourdat, 40090 Saint-Avit
- Golf de guinlet (35 mins) - 1, Rue Félix Soulès, 32800 Eauze
- Golf D'albret (45 mins) - Le Pusocq, 47230 Barbaste

For keen golfers, try the Moliets golf course (www.golfmoliets.com), where the French team trains, or Pau (www.paugolfclub.com), the oldest course on the continent dating back to 1856), or the Golf Le Phare in Biarritz (www.golf-biarritz.com).

Spa and Thalassotherapy

- Thermal Baths at Barbotan-Les-Thermes (15 mins) - All-in health and fitness packages and à-la-carte treatments available. Waters have beneficial effects for rheumatisms

Motor-racing

Watch races at Nogaro Racing track (35 mins), well known for Formula 3000, motorbike and 4 by 4 racing from April to October.

Flying Aeronautic Club Nogaro, Nogaro (35 mins)

River cruise **Nerac** (50 min) Les Croisières du Prince Henry

Touristic Train **Mezin** (38 min) Leisurely journey of 1h30 between historic cities of Mezin and Nérac

Casino Cazaubon (10 mins)

Brocante /Markets

- **La Bastide d'Armagnac/Saint Justin** (10 mins): alternate venue on Sunday mornings on the Main square: local produce and arts and crafts.
- **Mont-de-Marsan** (30 mins): Brocante on the first Wednesday of the month.

Music Festivals

- May Bandas à Condom
- June "Feria" de Vic Fezensac
- July Flamenco à Mont-de-Marsan
- July Festival de Country à Mirande
- July/August Nuits musicales en Armagnac
- July Cuivro' folizz à Fleurance (Brass)
- July Tempo latino à Vic Fezensac
- July/August Jazz in Marciac (well renowned)
- End of August Festival pyrotechnique à Lectoure (Fireworks)

Local Fêtes - Ferias

From May and August, each village celebrates its fête with entertainment, special meals, dancing and fireworks- visitors are always welcome. Here, people use the plural form fêtes because the event last several days, mobilising all the towns associations, bars, restaurants and bodegas, night and day, event in the smallest village.

The biggest event is in Mont de Marsan, Fêtes de la Madeleine, with corridas and courses landaises, float, fire-works in July. Or try the basque version, in Bayonne, also in July. Otherwise, find information on local village fêtes programs (Roquefort, Gabarret) on the board on the wall at the junction of the village. Entertainment ranges from cycle races to pétanque or quilles tournaments, theatre to discos, floats and fireworks to inter-villages. You'll see on the programs various speciality meals (escargots (snails), barbecued duck carcasses, sardinades (grilled sardines) among them). These convivial meals are not haute-cuisine but the food is always plentiful, and delicious, all in a convivial atmosphere.

Glossary:

Course landaise: local corridas involving cows of the same breed as the corrida bulls, but no harm is done to the animals. It is a kind of joust in which men have to show bravery, skill and suppleness facing the charging cow, either by swerving by or jumping over it.

Intervillage: villagers of various ages compete in an arena in games, many including a cow, which makes it good fun to watch.

Bandas: traditional music bands (brass, woodwind and percussion instruments) playing typical fêtes tunes

Bodegas: make-shift street bars serving sangria and local food

Pétanque: French for Boules

Quilles: Local skittles. Saint-Julien boasts the only indoors quille ground (quillier) in Aquitaine and the village club is proud to have 2 French champions amongst its members.

The Tourist Office in Gabarret sometimes organises afternoons with local players for tourists to discover the game.

Local restaurants

These are a few we suggest. We advise you to check beforehand the opening days and times (as these vary greatly), and whether you need to make a booking in advance.

For having eaten there recently, we recommend Le Relais in Gabarret, Les Tilleuls in Escalans, and the Restaurant du Golf in Saint-Avit. For a special occasion, the Château de Buros in Escalans, and for a very special one, the restaurant at La Bastide Gasconne in Barbotan, run by the 3 Michelin star French chef Michel Guérard.

- **Créon d'Armagnac** (2 min): Auberge des Chasseurs 05 58 44 34 66 – open daily for lunch only and Friday and Saturday evenings from 19h30. Traditional Gascon food.
- **Labastide d'Armagnac** (5 min) :
 - o crêperie Sucre Paille - 05 58 44 69 42 - open daily 10h30-18h0. Shut on Tuesday. Will open in the evening upon reservation.
 - o Ice-cream Bar (July and August) Galerie des glaces – delicious ice-creams!
 - o Pizzeria " La Giuletta"
- **St Justin** (15 min) : Hotel de France, on the square 05 58 44 83 61 – open daily from 12h00 for lunch and 19h45 for dinner. Shut on Sunday evenings.
- **Gabarret** (10 min):
 - o Restaurant Le Relais: good value for money - 05 58 44 35 74 – open daily 12h00 and 19h00 shut on Friday and Sunday evenings.
 - o Small pizzeria for take-away pizza – see menu and phone number in the book, Watch out: you need to phone to order and then **go and collect the pizzas!**
- **Escalans** (15 min drive):
 - o Restaurant des Tilleuls: 05 58 44 31 10, only opens for lunch, on the road between Gabarret and Escalans. Simple gascon food, very reasonably priced in a rustic setting – Shut on Saturdays.
 - o Château de Buros, delicious cuisine, slightly pricier, 05 58 44 34 30 – open daily only in the evening from 19h30. You need to book before 12h00.
- **Parlebosq-Saint-Cricq** (15 min): Le clos de Saint-Cricq 05 58 44 95 82 – only open for lunch. Shut on Wednesday
- **Barbotan** (15 min): several restaurants in the main street, the Hotel de la Paix (05 62 69 52 06) has a good restaurant, also the Hotel Cante-Grit, or Hotel Fleurs de Lees, more expensive (English chef with experience in top restaurants). The Bar La Coccinelle (05 62 09 57 94) in the centre near the Tourist office car-park sells good pizzas but service has been known to be hit and miss (usually good for kids).
- **Roquefort** (20 min) : Le Logis de Saint Vincent, 76, Rue Laubaner Tél : 05 58 45 75 36 (Dutch chef /French cuisine)
- **Saint-Avit** (25 min): Restaurant du Golf – nice setting, delicious with local ingredients and price very reasonable – only open at lunchtime
- **Villeneuve de Marsan** (30 min): the Hotel Hervé Garrapit has a very good restaurant (more expensive)
- **Le Houga:** (35 min); la Ferme aux Cerfs gets really good reviews
- **Eugénie Les Bains** (55 min away) Les Prés d'Eugénie, a bit far but 3 michelin stars chef Michel Guérard (book well in advance)
- **Bazas** : if you visit the town or the castles nearby, restaurant Les Remparts has good reviews.
- **Montreal:** if you visit the roman villa or tour the bastides town in the Gers, la Bombance gets very good reviews (you mustn't be in a rush!)