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# Toulouse, a guide for tourists



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MAIRIE DE



TOULOUSE



Bienvenue  
en France



## Toulouse, Heart of the South



*The Canal du Midi passes through Toulouse in the shade of the plane trees.*

*The Saint-Sernin Basilica, a jewel of Roman art.*

*The Capitole, now home to the City Hall, has been the heart of Toulouse since the Renaissance.*

*The violet, cultivated in Toulouse, is used in perfumery and confectionary.*



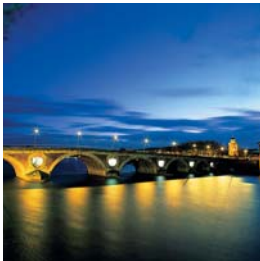
At the heart of the Midi region, Toulouse has always occupied an important place in the South-West of France. This 2000-year-old history shows itself in an architecture of brick and tiles that is typical of the cities, villages and farms of the Midi-Pyrenees region. Reflections of the golden light on the brick of Toulouse have earned it the name of the 'Ville Rose.' This very special colouring confers an atmosphere on the city that is at once gentle and warm.

Toulouse, France's fourth biggest city, is bubbling over with life. There's nothing like a stroll around the historic centre, walking alongside the Garonne and the Canal du Midi, or stopping in one of the many cafés whose

terraces spill out onto the streets. All over the city, the ambience is friendly, tinged with the well-meaning familiarity that is particular to the people of Southern France. Toulouse is also a major shopping destination. All the major internationally-renowned brands in fashion, design, leather goods and jewellery are represented in Toulouse. The city neighbourhoods also live by the rhythm of the open-air and covered markets. Here you'll find local products from the Midi-Pyrenees, which is one of the South-West's most important gastronomic regions – producing wine, foie gras, cheeses, charcuterie, and of course cassoulet – the Toulousain dish *par excellence*.

# Toulouse,

## At nightfall



The concert hall "Halle aux Grains", under the lighting of the Plan Lumière.

Place Saint-Georges: lively evenings on the restaurant terraces.

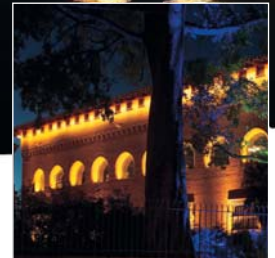
Le Pont Neuf - the first stone bridge to be constructed in the city, back in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

The Pont Saint-Pierre and the Dôme de La Grave se reflected in the Garonne.

At nightfall, the city gets dressed up. A second, peaceful and nonchalant life begins as soon as the day's work is over. Now is the time for relaxation – for the couples and families strolling amongst the young and seriously cool population of 120, 000 students. The nightlife areas teem with life from cinemas, theatres and concert halls, to bars and restaurants – some of which also have shows and entertainment. Gourmets will appreciate the cosmopolitan cuisine available: local, foreign, simple, familial or gastronomic. In summer, the nights are warm and the nightlife can go on until the break of dawn. A 'Plan Lumière' has recently highlighted sites and buildings with lighting specifically created for Toulouse: the Garonne, the churches, the façades, the pedestrian streets and the 'places' are shown off to their best advantage, offering a new vision of the urban landscape.



The Musée Saint-Raymond contains an impressive collection of antique art. The Zénith – biggest stadium in France after the one in Paris, offers a show arena with 9000 seats.



The Théâtre du Capitole is a world-famous venue for lyrical art.



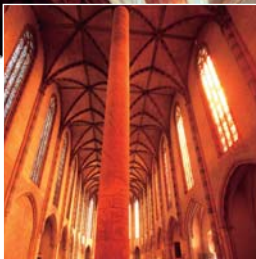
# Toulouse,

## Time and history

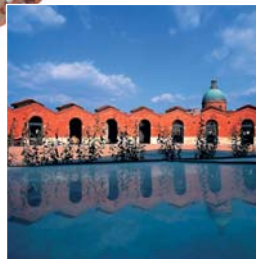
2,000 years of Toulousain history have left the city scattered with a first-rate heritage that is representative of the Southern French style at various moments in history. The Saint-Sernin basilica, a jewel of 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> century Roman art, is an important stage on the Saint-Jacques-de-Compostelle pilgrimage. It is home to the grave of Saint Saturnin, first bishop of Toulouse in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. The Jacobins convent buildings are visited for their Southern-French gothic architecture including the amazing “palm-tree”, a pillar from which twenty-two branches stem. At the heart of the antique dealer’s quarter, the Saint Etienne cathedral bears witness to the evolution of several styles of sacred architecture. The city is also very rich in Renaissance townhouses: hôtel de Bernuy, hôtel d’Assézat, hôtel de Pierre... Not to forget the Capitole, currently the City Hall, with its magnificently decorated historic rooms and the immense ‘place’ with its Occitan cross. Sneaking a peek under a porch can sometimes reveal stunning gardens and façades. 19<sup>th</sup> century industrial buildings renovated as cultural venues prolong the tradition of brick – such as the Galerie du Château d’Eau, the Musée des Abattoirs or the Bazacle – a permanent exhibition space on the banks of the Garonne.



The ornate ceilings of the Salle des Illustres at the Capitole.



The nave of the Eglise des Jacobins and its famous ‘palm-tree’.



On the banks of the Garonne, ‘les Abattoirs’ - museum of modern and contemporary art – brings the left bank to life.



The huge Place du Capitole can be home to every kind of event.



This erstwhile water tower shelters a gallery showing the work of internationally-renowned photographers.

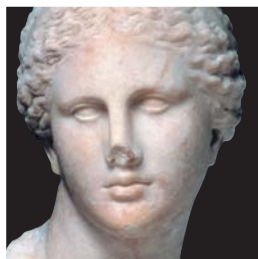




## Toulouse, Talents et creations



*Festivals held throughout the year showcase the artistic achievements of Toulouse.*



© Jean-François Peiré

*A concert of classical music at the Halle aux Grains.*

*The Vénus de Martres on display at the Musée des Antiques Saint-Raymond.*

*A crowd of visitors before the Picasso stage curtain at the Musée des Abattoirs.*



Toulouse is a city to satisfy the taste of every enthusiast of the arts. A variety of concert halls stage performances of classical, lyrical art, jazz, variety and electro-acoustic music. Plays and café-theatre productions take place all year round – and a significant proportion of works are created by Toulousain companies. Dance and creative activities are supported by a very active and innovative choreographic centre. The great artistic collections housed in the museums and foundations of the city present works from Antiquity to the contemporary period: Roman statues, medieval art, fine arts, decorative arts, graphic arts, modern and contemporary art, photography – these permanent exhibitions are complemented by a policy of temporary exhibitions produced in Toulouse or in association with other national and international museums. Numerous art galleries also actively participate in the dynamic of artistic creation. Toulouse also stands out for its book culture: there are very well-stocked libraries, and a large mediatheque, as well as a great number of independent bookshops. Around fifteen festivals - music, theatre, humour, dance, visual arts, cinema, literature - are staged in the course of the year, and complete the cultural facilities that are already very eclectic.



*Today, the Donjon du Capitole houses the Tourist Office.*

*As a leisure activity, sport or simply for the fun of it, a bicycle is always ready to go.*

*The banks of the Garonne are a favourite spot for those in search of calm and sunshine.*



The Canal du Midi is the oldest canal in Europe, connecting the Atlantic to the Mediterranean. Toulouse is its central stopping point. With 382 locks, aqueducts and tunnels, it has earned Unesco's 'World Heritage Site' label. The Garonne offers its banks and quays up to walkers and events, such as the ¡Rio loco! festival in the month of June. Boat-trips and barges for hire allow you to experience the city from the water. With its many cycle tracks, not-very-hilly profile and short distances, Toulouse also lends itself to travel by bike. Bicycles can be rented for a few hours or by the day. Toulouse is dotted with green spaces and parks. From the simple oasis of calm in a neighbourhood with a historic park – such as the Jardin des Plantes, whose 7 hectares are connected to the Jardin du Grand Rond and the Jardin Royal (both in the 'English Romantic' style) – to the Prairie des Filtres, which offers the fresh air of the Garonne riverbanks, or the Jardin Raymond VI, – a lively spot to pass through near the Musée des Abattoirs. On the edges of the city, six leisure bases and seven golf courses complete the palette of local green spaces. The Toulousain identity on the green is rugby. This sport is emblematic of South-Western France and is a passion that beats in every Toulousain heart – proud of their team, the Toulouse Stadium and their multiple victories.

## Toulouse, Nature and open air

*Rugby supporters are wild about the Toulouse Stadium.*



*The Canal du Midi, a World Heritage Site, invites you for a pastoral stroll.*



# Toulouse, The wings of knowledge



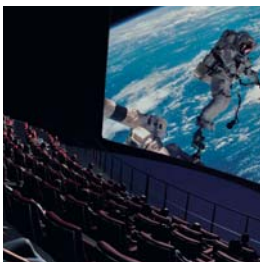
The Mir station  
at the Cité de l'espace.



City of every aeronautical  
achievement, Toulouse saw the  
advent of the first aeroplanes  
and invented the latest  
technology.



The Cité de l'espace will  
introduce you to the cosmos as  
you have never seen it before,  
with attractions that are at  
once scientific, fun and  
spectacular.



IMAX © SIS

Toulouse has been a land of aeronautical research for more than a century now. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Clément Ader succeeded in making the strange machine he called an 'avion' take off. It was also from Toulouse that the first 'Aéropostale' airmail links were opened – an adventure that was immortalized in the writing of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. The advent of the Airbus A380 today confirms Toulouse's position as aeronautical capital. Research, innovation and industry are able to offer original opportunities to visit, for example, the Airbus assembly line or the Jolimont Observatoire. The Cité de l'Espece is a one-of-a-kind theme park covering 3.5 hectares. It offers a wide range of interactive activities which allow the visitor to understand the science of the earth and the cosmos, from the infinitesimally small to the infinitely big.