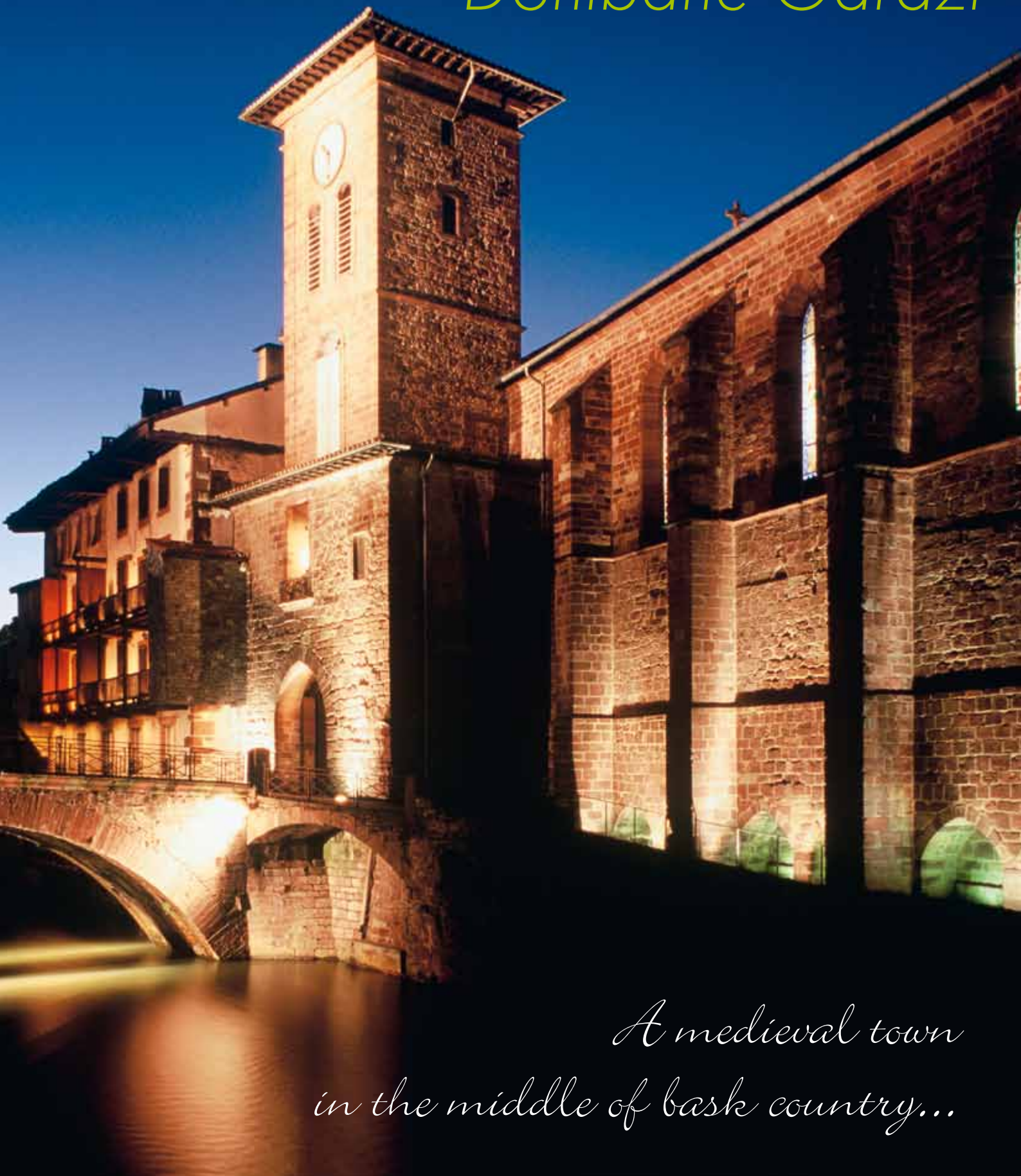


City map



SAINT-JEAN-PIED-DE-PORT

Donibane Garazi



*A medieval town
in the middle of bask country...*

Discovering the City of St-Jean-Pied-de-Port

Donibane Garaziko hiria ezagutzen

From its foundation in the latter part of the twelfth century by the King of Navarre, the town became the strong point for his kingdom on the North side of the Pyrenees. Strategically located at the foot of the Cize passes over the mountains to Roncesvalles. St Jean Pied de Port was destined to be a strong fortress with a garrison, a commercial centre and the great resting place for pilgrims from the north following the 'Way of St James' before crossing the Pyrenees on their way to Santiago de Compostela. Nestling at the confluence of the Béhérobie and Petit Nives and at the junction of the routes serving many of the major valleys of the Basque country (10 minutes from the Spanish border, 40 minutes from Bayonne, 1h 15 from Pamplona, and 1h 30 from Pau) this delightful town invites you to discover its rich history, its cuisine, its stunning landscapes, its charm and its lifestyle.

1 Mansart House: this house was built in the early 18th century for David de Fourré, a wool trader. The beautiful and harmonious facade shows great balance and proportion giving it an especial charm. It is topped with a "mansard" roof which gives the name to the house and has been the town hall since 1935.



2 The gate of Navarre: this beautiful arched and vaulted gateway is built into the north facing ramparts of the town. In medieval times this gate opened onto the main square of the town in front of the church where the market took place. In those days carts, wagons and carriages had to push their way through the market crowds to reach the stock stalls.

3 The gate of Notre-Dame: separating the Rue de La Citadelle from the bridge crossing the Nive to Rue d'Espagne this door has the statues of St John the Baptist and the Virgin and Child giving their benevolent protection to the travellers below.

4 The church of Notre-Dame-du-Bout-du-Pont:

other than the Cathedral of Bayonne this is the largest Gothic building in the French Basque country. Its construction is traditionally attributed to Sancho the Strong of Navarre in commemoration of the battle of Las Navas de Tolosa where Moorish dominance of Spain met its first defeat. The first foundation stones, with the marks left by the artisan stone cutters could have come from the primitive church (13th century) that the current church replaced. The majestic pink sandstone facade has a Gothic Portal with its columns decorated with carved capitals. The interior with a broad nave and two sides of two floors of tribunes presents an impressive display of slim pillars and pink sandstone columns. The polygonal chorus is flanked on both sides with curved rectilinear stained glass windows showing the arms of the town and the province of Navarre. The recently restored Cavaille Coll organ is in frequent use to accompany the church services.



5 Larrabure House: the old presbytery at N° 7 Rue de la Citadelle now has a new exhibition hall on the ground floor of the building. Come and see exhibitions covering many themes from Cultural Heritage to art in all its many and varied forms.

6 The gate of France: this town door takes its name from its position in the North facing wall of the town where visitors from and to France would have gained entrance.

Rue de la Citadelle: within the walls of the fortified town the houses are built facing each other on the steeply sloping street. In many cases the local pink sandstone of Arradoy has been used to edge the corners and the window and door openings of the houses, sometimes this has been done using alternating colours of the stone. The corbels, studs or beams overhanging the street are often carved as are other architectural features of the houses



on the street. The lintels frequently feature carved inscriptions with the names of the original owners of the house, the date it was built and a religious inscription or geometrical design is often incorporated.

7 Arcanzola house: the oldest surviving house on the street with an inscription dating it back to 1510. This house features the timbers of its frame and beautiful horizontal herring bone brick work. The house was the birthplace in 1531 of the Jesuit martyr the Blessed St John de Mayorga. He was subsequently martyred in the Canary Isles by a group of Calvinist privateers. On one of the beams supporting the eaves a small white cross commemorates his passing.



8



The Bishop's prison: on the far side of the garden separating it from the house of Laborde (now the Pilgrim Welcome Centre) is the building known as the Bishop's Prison. It is a landmark of the town and has a unique history. The building has served as a prison for two distinct periods. At first it was used by the Bishops of the Diocese of Bayonne during the Great Eastern Schism of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries before becoming the town prison in the late eighteenth century. The building still looks forbidding with its guard

entrance hall opening up into the guard house which leads to some spacious and well lit detention cells. A narrow staircase leads down to a vast medieval cellar with an arched ceiling which quite possibly functioned as a warehouse.

In this moment, a new evocation, a mysterious prison to escape... in the Middle Ages with the Pilgrim of Saint-Jacques.

Open from Easters wekk end to November 1st inclusive. Open on all days (excepting on Tuesdays) from 11.00 to 12.30 and 14.30 to 18.30. In July and August open daily from 10.30 to 19.00 without interruption.

Price: 3 € from 14 years and over, free under 14 years.

9

The gate of St-Jacques:

placed on the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites in 1998 this is the historic entrance for pilgrims en route to Compostela from the direction of La Madeleine in St-Jean le Vieux and then onwards from St Jean-Pied de Port towards Roncevalles. It



offers a beautiful view of the slops of Arradoy once quarried for their rose stone but now covered in the vines of the Iroulequy appellation. Beneath that in the town is the sports complex and the large building which is the Jai Alai where the game of Cesta Punta (a version of Pelota) is played. You will also see the commemorative stone for Juan de Huarte psychologist and author of an early ground breaking work on psychology which was used later by the philosopher Montesquieu in his work *Spirit of the Laws*.

10

A walk along the walls: restorative work carried out in the last two years to the fire step (the walkway behind the walls) means that you can now walk along the back of the medieval walls from the Gate of Navarre to the St Jacques gate in the footsteps of the soldiers of the garrison as they patrolled the walls protecting the fortified town. The loopholes, turrets, and breeches for musket and cannon immerse the walker in the past and you are drawn in to the heritage and history of St-Jean Pied de Port the fortress of the Pyrenees. This pleasant and historic walk is suitable for all ages.

The king gate: in the past, the ramp starting near the gate of St Jacques on Rue de la Citadelle was the main entrance to the fortress itself. The carts of supplies and carriages of the nobility would all have used this winding slope, the cobbles of which were placed at an angle to give grip for the hooves of the horses and oxen as they struggled to drag their loads to the Citadelle.

11

The Citadelle: Towering over the town from its position on the hill Mendiguren the Citadelle dominates the town and the surrounding area. Built atop of previous fortifications including Roman the present building was built between 1625 to 1627, it was improved again during the 1640's with further improvements made to the doors buildings and underground passage ways at the suggestion of Vauban during his visit in 1685. The building is now used as a secondary school but can be visited as part of the guided tours in July and August.

12

Viewing point "the royal half moon": two orientation tables situated on the bastion at the front of the Citadelle give explanations of the wonderful panorama of the valley and surrounding mountains.

The drawbridge provides the entrance to the Hall of Governors which is topped by a slim bell tower, to its right is the start of the stairs to the Postern gate. The 259 steps run inside the curtain wall from the height of the Citadelle to the gate of the Echaugette built onto the aspe of the church on the banks of the Nive. The ascent of these stairs is a challenge to the very fittest and many an experienced walker has had to stop for breath, one can imagine carrying out such exercise wearing a pack and carrying a musket!

The path of schoolchildren (The Long Way round): located on the left flank of the fortress in the wood leading between the Citadelle and the Way of St- James is a staircase used by the students on their daily trip to school.

13

Eyheraberry's bridge and footpath: if you turn left after passing through the gate of Notre Dame you will be on a riverside footpath which passes the gate of Echaugette and then follows the river Nive. This is a delightful walk away from the tumult in the centre of the town as it follows the curves of the river to the esplanade of Eyheraberry (in Basque "The New Mill"). At the time of the revolution this was an open air theatre where the patriotic holidays were celebrated. Above the clear waters of the Béhérobie Nive with the trout gliding beneath the surface you might catch the bright blue flash of a kingfisher as you stand on the arched stone bridge. Built in the 17th century this bridge is known wrongly as the "Roman Bridge".

14

The Spanish gate: part of the fortified walls built in the 1840's the Spanish Gate opens onto the main medieval route crossing the Pyrenees, this later became "la Route Napoleon" and was renamed the 'Route of Marshal Harispe. This is the route which is now used by the pilgrims on their seven hour trek to Roncevalles crossing the Pyrenees en route to Santiago de Compostela.

The street of Spain: this area, which was outside of the medieval fortifications, was the home of artisans and labourers visiting the town. Some of the lintels over doorways and windows are decorated with signs indicating the trade of the occupants. At number 9 there is an inscription which reveals the high cost of wheat in 1789 showing just how great a concern this was at that time.

15

The House of the States of Navarre: the States of Navarre, a sort of parliament used to gather in this large 17th century house. The arched entrance is topped by a stylised design with the date of 1610. During those times the walls must have rung with the sounds of animated discussion, the debates being both lively and passionate.

Tourist train:

Guided tours of the city. Every day from Easter to All Saints. It starts near the Tourist Office. Duration 45 mn.

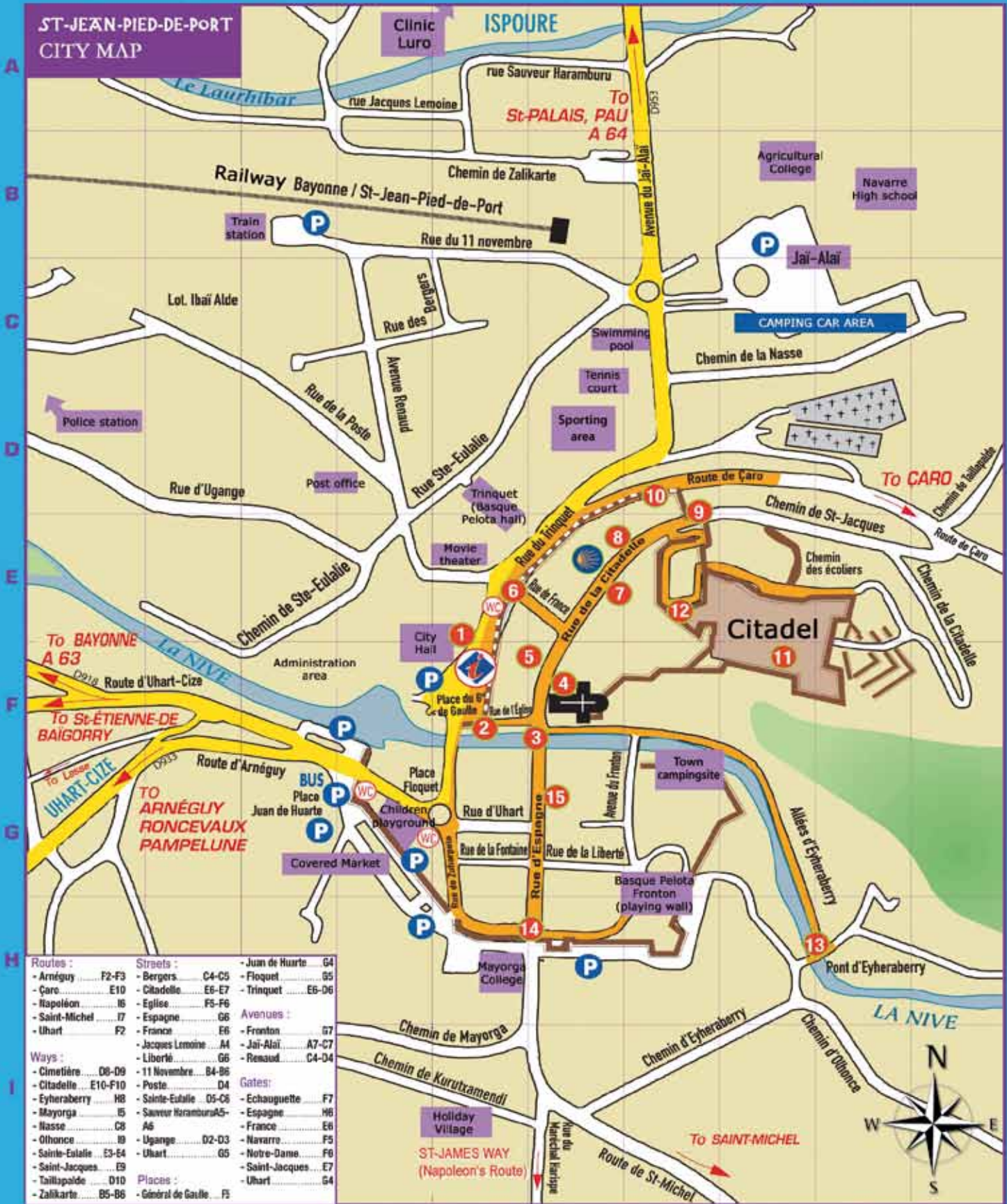
Prices: Adult: 5.50 € / Children (7-12 years): 2.50 € / School Group: 2 € / Group Adults: 4 € (over 30 people).

Guided tours of the Citadelle:

July and August. Monday and Wednesday 14:30. Departure at the gate of Saint-Jacques.

Duration 1h30.

Prices: 3 € above 10 years / free under 10 years.



Captions

- 1 Mansart House (City hall)
- 2 The gate of Navarre
- 3 The gate of Notre-Dame

- 4 Notre-Dame-du-Bout-du-pond church
- 5 Larrabure House (n° 7)
- 6 The gate of France
- 7 Arcanzola House (N° 32)
- 8 Prison called "the Prison of the Bishops"
- 9 The gate of Saint-Jacques
- 10 Walkway
- 11 The Citadel
- 12 Viewpoint
- 13 Eyheraberry Bridge

- 14 The gate of Spain
- 15 House of the Navarre States
- 16 Pilgrims office (n° 39)
- 17 Tourism office