



Carpentras, just half an hour away from Avignon by train, is a great little place to visit if you want to learn more about foodie France.

Fridays, in the winter, are a chance to see keen-nosed restaurateurs and wholesalers coming to buy the finest black truffles which you can sample for yourself in town. You could even have a go at truffle hunting. In the summer, attention turns to cherries and strawberries, with an annual 'Fête de la fraise' taking place in April.

All this takes place within sight of Mont Ventoux, an iconic mountain which provides a unique climate for the surrounding vineyards which, as well as being a connoisseur's choice, are also a place where eco-responsibility is taken seriously.

While here, why not visit France's oldest active synagogue which dates from 1367?



Strolls

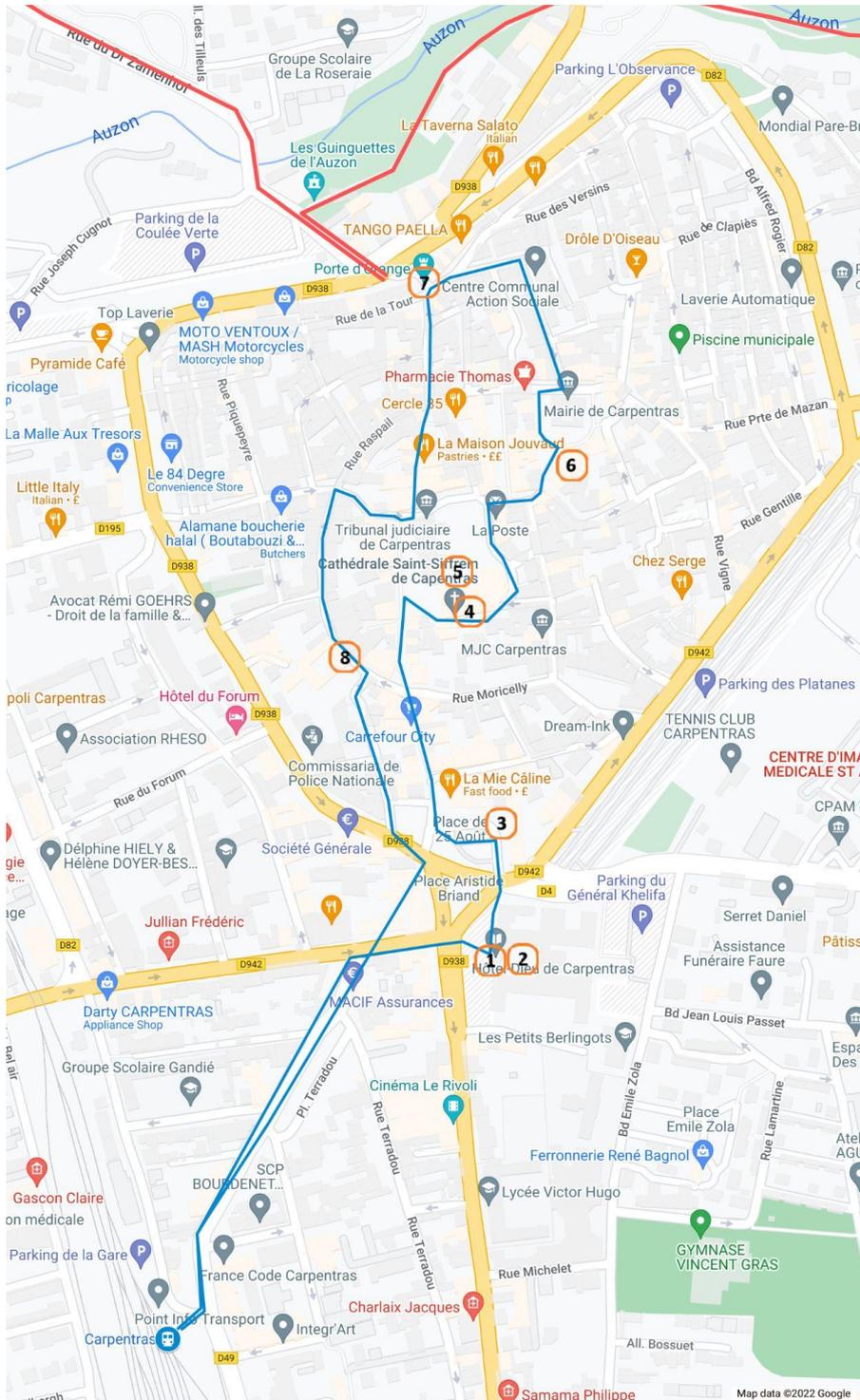
- **[A wander around town \(3km blue\)](#)**
- **[River and canal loop \(3km red\)](#)**

Interactive Map

Here is a [link to a map](#) that can help you find your bearings.

A wander around town (3km blue)

This walk takes in the main sights of the town and should help you work up an appetite for winter truffles or summer strawberries.



- 1 Hôtel-Dieu de Carpentras
- 2 Bibliothèque l'Inguimbertaine
- 3 Truffle tasting
- 4 Ball of rats
- 5 Roman Arch
- 6 Carpentras Synagogue
- 7 Porte d'Orange
- 8 Chapelle du Collège
- 9 Chapelle Notre-Dame de Santé

Upon leaving the station turn left, but avoid the Avenue de la Gare which runs parallel to the tracks and is a bit of a long way into town (if you do accidentally take it, as I did my first time, just turn right at the next big road)

Instead, take the right hand fork onto the imaginatively named D49, which was/is Avenue Wilson (there is the occasional painted out sign), which leads into the centre of town and at the end of that road, turn right into the equally inspired D942/Avenue Clemenceau.

At the end of that road, cross over at the crossing to the grand(ish) building in front of you. This is the former hospital, the Hôtel-Dieu (1) which is now home to the Museum l'Inguimbertaine. Joseph-Dominique d'Inguibert was a local lad who became the local Bishop of Carpentras in 1735 after a spell as confessor to the pope and was a keen writer and collector of books and other treasures which he left to the town on his death.

Go through into the courtyard which hosts the professional truffle market. Inside the building are plaques to each of the donors (2). The oldest are simply coats of arms but the more recent ones often depict a scene that typified the donor's life and as a result, acts as something of a story of the people of Carpentras - or at least the wealthy philanthropic ones...



Hôtel-Dieu



Revolving hatch



Donors' plaques

But a different story is told at the access to the chapel (Chapelle de l'Hôtel-Dieu). To the right of the entrance is also a little door to the right which has a revolving hatch. Mothers would leave the babies they could not afford to keep here.

After leaving the building, cross the road and into the square where truffles (along with other produce) are sold to the general public on Fridays (3). You can buy truffle produce and other local goodies at the back of the Office de Tourisme on the right hand side.

Leave the square on the far side along the Rue de la République.

Continue all the way until it opens out onto the main town square, Place Charles de Gaulle.

On the right is the Cathedral of Saint-Siffrein, which is worth a nosey, but probably the most intriguing feature is on the Porte des Juifs (4), which is round the right hand side of the Cathedral (Place Saint-Siffrein). No one knows why there is a ball of rats above the door.



Porte des Juifs



Ball of rats

Follow the path which leads around the cathedral and behind the former episcopal palace (now Palais de Justice) where there is a Roman triumphal arch (5).

At the far end of the park/playground turn right (Rue d'Inguibert) which wends round to another square that contains the Hotel de Ville (6). This is the Place de la Juiverie - the former Jewish ghetto of the town, which still contains the Synagogue (on the right), the oldest in France still in use. Details of opening times are [here](#).



Synagogue outside



Synagogue inside - OT Carpentras

On the far side of the square runs the covered Rue des Halles. Turn left and walk down it, turning right onto the Rue Porte d'Orange which leads to the 14th Century Port d'Orange (7).

Turn left onto Rue de la Tour and walk down it turning left onto Rue des Frères Laurens and turn right at the end on to Rue Raspail.

Continue down the street which becomes Rue du College and pass the Chapelle du Collège, which often has exhibitions (8). Note the Liberte Egalite, Fraternite which has been chiselled

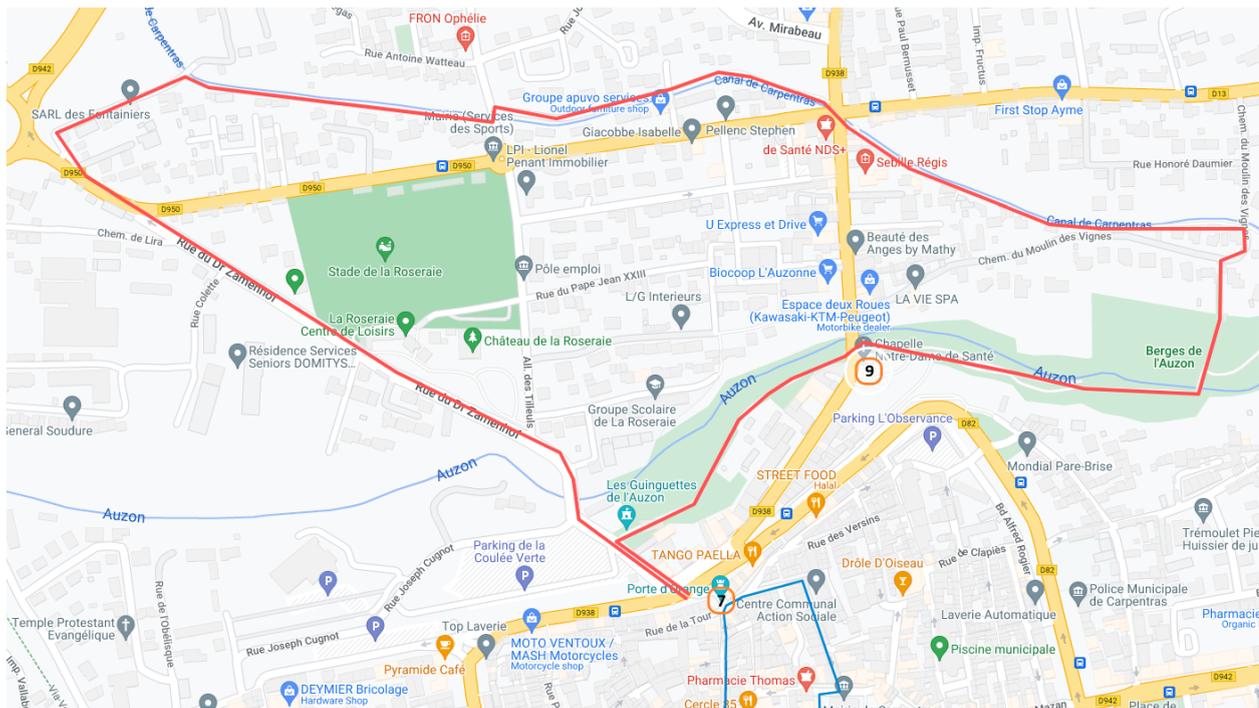
into the stonework, the same as the Cathedral, and is a reminder of the strained relationship between the Republic and the Church over the 19th Century.



Turn right onto Rue de la République which brings us out to the square with the Office de Tourisme.

Cross the road and follow the path round onto the D942 and then left onto the D49 which has a sign for Gare Routiere. Then follow the road back to the station. If you have any time free, perhaps you could grab a drink from the friendly people at the Train de Petit Vitesse cafe.

River and canal loop (3km red)



If you've had enough urban time, why not go for a nice little loop through some nature?

Leave through the port d'Orange, cross the road and take the little street to your left heading down the hill (Chem. de la Roseraie). A footpath crosses the road. Take it to the right and follow the course of the river past the little chapel of [Notre-Dame de Santé](#) (9) as far as the weir where it meets the canal. Follow the canal to the left until you reach the roundabout where you turn left to head back to town and the tower of the Port d'Orange.