

The Underground River of Labouiche

Deep below the village of Labouiche, located about 6 Km NW of Foix, 67Km from the villa, about 1½h drive, is another one of the Audes amazing natural wonders, namely Europe's longest navigable river. Approximately 4 Km, of the river are accessible, but the public tour is about 1.5 Km and takes about 75 minutes.



To experience this fantastic river, you first need to get to Labouiche, which is on the D1 Road, when you arrive at the visitors centre, there is free parking, a snack bar (open 15 June to 31 August), a gift shop, and a shaded picnic area. It's also a good idea to wear closed comfortable shoes, and to take a jumper, as the temperature in the cave is around 13C.

The tour starts at the ticket office (Adults € 10.80, Children €8.80, or if you are a group, and book in advance Adults €8.50, Children €7.00), followed by a 10 minute-ish walk to the entrance. Once there you have a choice of descending the 60m either via a ramp, or by around 200 steps, which sometimes can be steep and also spiral, so it probably better to take the steps down and the ramp up at the end of the tour.



Once you arrive at the bottom, your guide will settle you into one of the aluminium boats, and then start to move the boat along by pulling on the cables that are attached overhead. While naturally the guides are all French, a good number of the do speak passable English, and are very knowledgeable, and will talk about the cave, the river, and point out rock

formations, (stalagmites/tites etc) which have all been names after their appearances, like "crocodile, witch" etc, while at the same time giving ample warning when you have to duck to avoid banking your head. There are also 2 boat changes to do during the trip.

The cave can be visited between 1st April & 11th November, however opening times do move around. July & August 09:30 until 17:00, but you still need to be there by 15:00 to do the full tour. Its strongly advised that you go in the morning to avoid the crowds. April to June tours run between 10:00 and 11:00, then 14:00 to 16:30, and likewise in September. October to November, Closed on Mondays and tours run between 14:00 & 16:00, with exception of weekends, when its 10am to 11am and 2pm to 4:30pm. Also please note that photography is not allowed.

<http://www.labouiche.com/accueil.php?lg=en>





