

Local Caves

For those interested in geology, something a little different, or if you are unlucky enough to catch a rainy day then a visit to one of the many cave's that honeycomb this part of France making it one of richest area of subterranean systems in France. While the majority of big caves that are open to the public are located in the North of the Languedoc region around 200 miles away> However there are some spectacular caves, nearby, including the **Cave of Niaux**.



The [Grotte de Niaux](#) is one of the few caves with painted walls that is still open to the public. Located a short distance from the Village of Niaux, along the D56, it



contains lots of prehistoric paintings of outstanding quality dating back to between 11500 and 10500 years. Visits to the cave are highly regulated, Between July and September there are 11 tours a day, including one in English at 1:30 pm, and it is essential that you book in advance. Booking can be made by e-mail info@grands-sites-ariège.fr, or by phone 05 61 05 10 10. The tour is

not suitable for children under 15, and please remember to dress appropriately, with sturdy shoes, and a jacket or jumper, as the cave floor has been left in its natural state and is wet and uneven and the ambient temperature is around 12°C.

Also nearby is the famous Grotte de Lombrives, which is the largest cave in Europe having a length of 24 miles ! Because of the caves size, tours are of various duration, lasting between 1 and 7 hours. The visit combines history with mythology and geology. According to legend the cave contains the tomb of Hercules' lover Pyrène, but it will be



the awesome geology that impress you. The cave is located just off the RN20 at USSAT LES BAINS, and there is a scenic train ride to the cave's entrance, not included in the admission price. For information regarding tour times and prices, check the website at www.grotte-lombrives.fr only available in French at the moment.

Finally for something totally different, why not visit the underground river of Labouiche, and take a leisurely 1.5 hour boat ride. Located 6km from Foix on the D1. This is a very unique experience, and well worth the trip, for more information have a look on the website www.labouiche.com

