



1. The Place du Port : the start of your visit.

From the Middle Ages until the end of the 18th century all economic activity and transport centred on the rivers, and consequently here in Limeuil commercial activity grew in importance. Small boats arriving from the *Massif Central* unloaded their goods at the *Place du port*. The goods were then stored in the Chai (warehouse) before being loaded onto *gabarrs* (barges) for transport to Bordeaux. Before entering the old village, notice the former inn « l'Ancre du Salut » which has retained its handsome 15th century renaissance façade. Pass through the old gate archway, dating from the 14th century, (note the levels of flooding in past years, carved into the stonework) and turn left through the gate in the wall into the garden of the *Mairie*.

2. The Mairie: (the offices of the Mayor).

This building was originally a Franciscan monastery. Evidence of its religious origins can be seen high up on the wall opposite the *Point tourisme* - note the blocked up window, topped with a 3-lobed design. Leave the garden and continue up the main street. In former times, this 4 metre wide street allowed access to various shops, workshops and public buildings, and above all, to the upper village and its fortified castle.



3.

Before you reach the **Forge**, note, on your left, one of the *andrones* between the houses - narrow gaps which enabled the disposal of waste water from lavatories, sinks and rainwater, and equally acted as fire-breaks.

4.

A bit further up on your left, you will find the **Échoppe de tisserand** (weaver's shop). The medieval houses opposite still retain the arches at ground floor level where traders had their stalls.

5.

As you continue to climb the hill, you will pass the former school, before arriving at the fine **Maison du Porche** (the house over the archway). Originally there were strong wooden doors here to separate the 'upper' from the 'lower' village in case of attack - although all villagers were able to take refuge in upper Limeuil. The former castle stables were situated here.

6.

When you reach the fork in the road, take the **Grande Rue** to the left. Most of the houses on this street have been renovated, but many have retained their original features : arched doorways, dormer windows, triangular roof-space vents, stone - tiled roofs, the *genoises* (projecting layers of tile to support the overshot roofs), and free-standing chimneys. In medieval times, these modest houses served as a 'shield' by providing increased height to the ramparts. Along the length of the Grande Rue you will also notice a number of narrow alleyways leading up to the former castle. A community of tenant farmers, labourers and fishermen established itself in this area. At the end of the street, you will find the second fortified gateway, and the old public drinking fountain.

7.

The **Porte du Récluzou**: Dating from the 15th and 16th centuries this gateway is of barrel arch construction faced with a pointed arch on the exterior. The gateway was not just a thoroughfare, but also the meeting point of the medieval town and the countryside. With the fountain on your left, climb the steps and continue about 30 meters then turn to look at the Justice's House and its arched doorway.

8.

The **Maison de la Justice** (Justice's House). The room inside the arched doorway was the cell in which petty criminals and inebriated bargemen were held while they sobered up. Follow the track under the house and shortly turn right up the path that leads to the church.





Discover the history of Limeuil

9. Walk alongside the church until you come to a fine Perigourdiian house with a wooden terrace, on your left. This old building was the former village **House of pleasure**, where young ladies offered comfort to the bargemen who were away from home !

10. Turn left onto the narrow path that runs alongside the house - these pathways are known locally as 'carreyrou'. You can see the old ramparts. At the end of this path, to your left, you will see the **Marquisat Gate**, another of the four gateways of the fortified town. Turn right to return to the church.

11. The **Church of Saint Catherine** (the patron saint of boatmen). Officially became the parish church of Limeuil in the 19th century, supplanting the Chapel of Saint Martin down in the valley. It is now regularly used by local Anglicans. The church dates from the 14th and 15th centuries, but stands on more ancient foundations from the 12th century. Unusually, entry to the church is by the side door, and not at the west end.

12. Continue your walk by descending to the **Place des Ormeaux** (sadly the elm trees have now gone). On this square stood the Market Hall; and here as well the protestants built their place of worship, its existence still testified to by a wrought iron cross on a stone plinth. Carry on down the hill into the *Place des Fossés*.

13. The **Place des Fossés**. This square owes its name to the original defensive ditch outside the walls which protected the feudal castle. All that remains of the castle are a few foundations of the old stronghold. The building that you will now see was built in 1920 in Moorish style.



14. The Parc panoramique. On the site of the old castle, in the 19th century a landscaped garden with a cosmopolitan arboretum was created. Contemporary gardens were installed there, associated with paths of interpretation on the landscapes, the arboretum and shipping. From the belvedere, you have a splendid point of view on the Vézère-Dordogne confluence. Before you leave Limeuil, be sure to visit down in the valley, on the road to Le Bugue :



15. The Chapel of St Martin. This church was built in 1194, and is an example of the simplest style of Perigourdiian church architecture. Legend has it that it was built on the orders of the King of England, Richard I (the Lionheart) in earthly recompense for the murder of Archbishop Thomas Becket in Canterbury cathedral. It is noteworthy for the perfection of its proportions, the wealth of surviving frescoes, new stained glass designed to throw coloured light across the interior stonework, and two incredibly preserved inscribed tablets set into the interior walls.

*We thank you for visiting Limeuil,
and we hope you enjoy your stay in Perigord
and in the Land of the Bastides.*



Pays des Bastides



LES PLUS BEAUX
VILLAGES
DE FRANCE

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*Limeuil gets its name from the old occitan word :
limoialum, which means
« a place planted with elms »*