



Chemin de CLUNY : GUYENNE - GASCOGNE

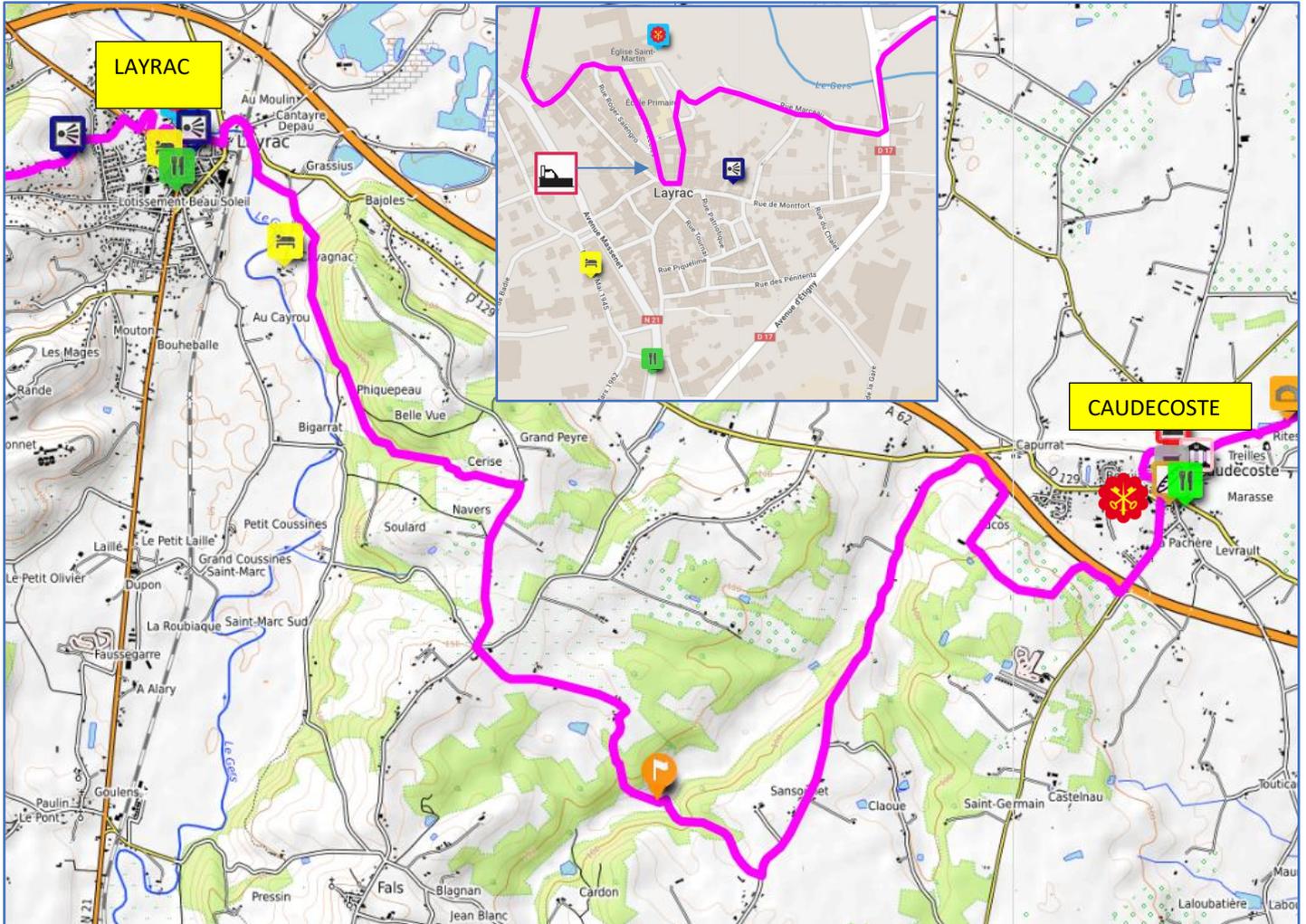


DIRECTION WEST - EST : Agen - Moissac



STAGE 10 R: Layrac - Caudecoste

Section length: 13,6 km Allow: 3h15mn Height difference: + 209m / - 201m Difficulty: Easy



Waymarking: Red and green 

Driving distance to Layrac is 10km from Agen and 59km from Moissac

Parking: Place du Royal near the Priory

Starting point: Square in front of the Mairie (Place Jean Jaurès)

Place Jean Jaurès offers the opportunity for refreshments in a shady spot (benches, café/bar, bakery, town hall).

From the square 'Place Jean Jaurès', turn left onto 'Rue Joseph Danglade' and continue straight through the arch of the bell tower. This leads to the tree-lined 'Place du Royal' near the Priory. (View point over the Gers and the Garonne valley).

Proceed down the concrete steps at the edge of the square, towards the 'Gers' valley. Carry straight on along the 'Rue Marceau' until you reach the main road (D17). Turn left and go over the bridge, crossing the river 'Gers'. Then turn right before a metal horse onto the D129 (signposted 'Caudecoste'). Follow the road and go under the railway bridge. (Please be extremely vigilant of the traffic, as there is no pavement).

Continue for **20m** and turn right after the lavoir (former wash-house) onto the grass. Follow the trees alongside the river (the '**Gers**'). This becomes a grass track. Continue with the river on your right. At the end of the track, cross a brook and turn immediately left onto a grass track skirting a field. The trees will now be on your left. At the end of the track turn right where it leads onto a tarmac road.

Carry straight on along the road for **100m** and then turn left before the drive to the 'Chateau de Cavagnac' (B&B).

The track becomes a grass track, then a woodland track leading up the hill.

After about **2.5km**, when you reach the road at the top of the hill, turn right. After **1.1 km** you come to a crossroads with a house called '**Au Carrefour**'.

Turn left and after **15m** immediately right, signposted '**St Ament**' and '**Bouet**'. Keep going on the road for **1.0 km** and follow it through the hamlet as it bends right until the last house called '**St Ament**', where you turn left.

Follow the track for **200m** and then take the left fork, following the path into woodland. Continue downhill until you reach the brook 'l'Estressol'. Cross the brook and continue on the path for about **900m**. This leads into woodland and starts to mount.

At the top turn left onto a tarmac road and follow it for **2.9km**. Turn right onto a tarmac track signposted '**Tucos**' (this is about 300m after you pass a house called '**Sarrebruck**' and just before you reach the **D12**). Follow the track uphill for approx. **800m** past a metal barn, where the tarmac ends.

Continue to a farm. At the top, turn left before the farm buildings.

After **200m** the path continues straight on between trees, then goes past a concrete block with an old water tank, then alongside fields. When the path starts to go downhill, follow it round to the left into further woodland. At the bottom turn right and continue with the motorway on your left.

When you reach the road (**D114**), turn left, passing under the motorway bridge. Continue to the village of Caudecoste. Cross the **D129** and carry straight on along the '**Rue de 19 Mars 1962**' until you reach a square ('**Place de la Mairie**').

Caudecoste:

Caudecoste is the only bastide (fortified village) founded by a religious order (Cluny).

Its history dates back to ancient times. Neolithic objects have been found here. There is also a listed Bronze Age site a few hundred meters from the village.

The first inhabitants, from 1200 BC, were Ligurians. They believed the local spring – now known as 'La Fontaine de St Jean' - had healing properties. The Ligurians were driven out around 500 BC by the Iberians, who then settled here. The archives indicate that a village was on the present site from the year 900 AD, then belonging to the Viscount of Bruilhois. In 1049, Caudecoste (which belonged formerly to the church of Saint-Martin de Layrac) became a dependency of the Cluniac abbey, the Prior of Layrac being the "Seigneur" (Lord).

The 'lavoir' (former wash-house) provides a stopping place for walkers and hikers on the Cluny Way, which passes through Caudecoste.

What to see in Layrac:

*The listed **church of St Martin**, a part of the Cluniac priory of the 11th and 12th centuries, is a masterpiece of Romanesque architecture.*

A majestic portal marks the entrance, and the church interior is built around a single nave of astonishing width. Remains of Romanesque mosaics are still visible in the floor, depicting the biblical scene of Samson slaying the lion. Numerous sculpted capitals adorn the pillars. The choir is topped by a dome ten metres in diameter and a large apse with nine windows encloses the sanctuary. It is one of the largest Romanesque churches in France to have a dome suspended on flat pendentives.

*Coming from the square in front of the town hall and heading towards the 'Esplanade du Royal', you will see the **Gothic bell tower and its porch**, dating from the 12th to 14th centuries. These are the remains of the old parish church of Santa Maria. There is a room on the 1st floor containing a Renaissance fireplace bearing the coat of arms of the city.*

*There are magnificent **views towards the Gers and the Garonne valleys** from the Esplanade du Royal.*

*The **old town** still has a number of half-timbered houses in good condition.*

*There is an interesting old '**lavoir**' (former wash-house) with a copper funnel which collects the rainwater as a roof. This is in the 'Chemin de Verdun', along the continuation of the Cluny way towards Moirax.*