

Sightseeing tour of the crosses - Saint-Bauzille-de-Putois

Short tour 2 km

Park in the lot under the suspension bridge:

At the beginning of the walk, remember to take a look at the Cross of Saint Mécisse, which, although it is in Agonès, is perfectly visible from the village, in the axis of the Grand-Rue. It plays an important role in the history of the village it overlooks from high above...

Start from the end of the rue de Marat (cross No. 01), take the direction of the village on the rue de l'Abattoir. Walk across the place du Pré and take the rue du Four.

Turn left on the rue du Pin (cross No. 02). At the end of the street, walk across the Grand-Rue to take the rue de l'Agantic (cross No. 03 and 04).

Take the rue Neuve on your right to reach the rue du Croutou.

At the end of this street on your left you will find the Place du Christ (cross No. 14).

Facing the café de l'Union, take the small rue de l'Eglise on its right to get to the Place de l'Eglise (cross No. 15).

After the church square, turn left on rue du Four and then take the rue d'Albert on your right. At the end turn right on the Grand rue (cross No. 16). At the end of the Grand-Rue where it reaches the route de Brissac you will find the cross No. 17.

Turn right on the route Brissac to reach your starting point and thus close the loop of the cross sightseeing tour.

Sightseeing tour of the crosses - Saint-Bauzille-de-Putois

Long tour 5 km

Park in the lot under the suspension bridge:

At the beginning of the walk, remember to take a look at the Cross of Saint Mécisse, which, although it is in Agonès, is perfectly visible from the village, in the axis of the Grand-Rue. It plays an important role in the history of the village it overlooks from high above...

Start from the end of the rue de Marat (cross No. 01), take the direction of the village along the banks of the Hérault. Walk along the rue du Pierrou towards the rue du Pin.

Follow the rue du Pin (cross No. 02) and turn left into the rue de l'Eglise. At the end of the street, turn left on the Grand-Rue to take the rue de l'Agantic on your right (cross No. 03 and 04).

At the end of the rue de l'Agantic, turn left on the avenue du Chemin-Neuf (cross No. 05) just before the Tobacconist.

Continue on the avenue du Chemin-Neuf all the way to the roundabout of the Auberge (cross No. 06).

From the roundabout, take the ancien chemin de Gange. At the junction, take the chemin d'Emma on your right and then the rue de la Roubiade on your left.

At the end of this street (cross No. 07) go up the steps and turn left on the route de la Grotte.

At the Green Cross junction (cross No. 08) take the chemin de Pouzols (cross No. 09) on your right.

Turn right on the chemin de la Plantade (cross No. 10), at the crossing continue on your right always on the chemin de la Plantade (cross No. 11).

After the Mas de La Plantade, turn left on the route des Tuileries which overlooks the Cemetery. Go down the steps (cross No. 12) and turn right on route de Montoulieu.

The entrance of the cemetery is a bit further down this road (cross No. 13).

Opposite, cross the Thaurac school parking. Walk along the right side of the school to reach the chemin des écoles. Turn right on the small pebbled path to reach the avenue du Chemin-Neuf.

Cross the avenue to reach rue du Croutou. At the end of this street on your left you will find the Place du Christ (cross No. 14).

Facing the café de l'Union, take the small rue de l'Eglise on its right to get to the Place de l'Eglise (cross No. 15).

After the church square, turn right on rue du Four and left on impasse Martial. Carry on along the Grand rue (cross No. 16). At the end of the Grand-Rue where it reaches the route de Brissac you will find the cross No. 17.

Turn right on the route Brissac to reach your starting point and thus close the loop of the cross sightseeing tour.

The different types of crosses

1 – Road crosses

Crossroads have always been the subject of special attention. There is, indeed, a symbolism of the crossing roads, and often crossroads cause what we call here a "fear". The cross is therefore used here as a talisman. We must not neglect a more prosaic role of indicator: when the crossing is under the snow, the cross continues to indicate its position.

In Saint Bazille, the Croix de l'Agantic (which figures on 18th century map) and the Croix de l'Auberge are examples of this type of cross.

Finally, a number of roadside crosses are also crosses on the path of the dead. From the deceased's house to the parish church, the funeral procession stopped at all the crosses and appropriate prayers were recited

2 - Rogation and procession crosses

Some road crosses were also used for processions, including Rogations, a festival today well forgotten but essential in rural areas.

The Rogations were a liturgical feast lasting three days, from Monday to Wednesday prior to Ascension Day. These Rogations, or minor litanies, were instituted in 469 by Saint Mamert, Bishop of Vienne in Dauphiné, following a series of natural calamities. It was probably Christianization of Gallo-Roman rites for the fertility of the land.

Priest in the lead, the procession of the parishioners went through the land from one end to the other, stopping at the crosses to bless the meadows and the fields. Each day was devoted, in principle, to the blessing of a particular type of crop: meadows, fields, vines or some other secondary crop. The goal was obviously to guarantee, through adequate prayers, the prosperity of the village community by immunizing its various productions against the attacks of the dark forces. This is why it was important for the peasants to have crosses in strategic places, along the roads admittedly, but overlooking the meadows and crops. In Saint Bazille, the Croix de Marat, the Croix de l'Auberge and the Croix de la Crouzette remain in the memories of those who took part in the Rogations.

There were, however, many other opportunities to lay flowers at the crosses because the processions were numerous.

From the eighteenth century especially, the number of **Missions** increased in the parishes. Here again, there is a large procession and then, to celebrate the closing of the Mission, a cross is erected in a large crowd competition. Almost always dated from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, they are characterized, besides the date, by a large base and are usually made of cast iron or wrought iron.

In St Bazille, the cross of the Place du Christ, erected in 1878 on the north corner of the old cemetery (under the pontificate of Leo XIII, Monseigneur Anatole de Roverie of Cabrières being bishop of Montpellier) recalls the mission preached by Father Vigourel, which began in 1878, the second Sunday of Lent and closed on Holy Easter Day, moved in October 1896 to where it is now; after this date, the public square will take the name of "Place du Christ". It was restored in 1972 by Mr. Maurice Gay.

3 - Cross of limits

The cross, like the menhir before it, can serve as a landmark. Entry and exit of villages are normally provided with a cross, but all boundaries, religious or secular, could thus be materialized.

The different types of crosses

4 - Crosses of villages and cemeteries

Each village, as we have said, opens and closes with crosses (at least on Catholic land). But the squares are also christianised, as well as the cemeteries.

We know that the cemeteries were all originally in the immediate vicinity of the church. It was not until the end of the 19th century that the new "morality" of hygiene pushed them outside of the boroughs. The cross that sat in the center of the field of the dead could make the same journey, or remain on the spot to become a "cross of the Church".

In St Bauzille, the cross on the map of the church marks the site of the first cemetery that surrounded the church and was moved (before 1567) to the present place du Christ. It was in 1876 that it was moved to its current location.

5 - Cross bridges, peaks, springs and fountains

Each important point of the landscape is subject to Christianization.

Bridges are obligatory points of passage, and often were the place of a toll. A cross could guarantee (in theory) the legitimacy of this tax.

Almost all the summits, on the other hand, have kept a cross (On the commune of Agones the cross of St Mécisse). The Christianization role, signal or reminder is obvious here.

Finally, springs and fountains have also received the mark of Christianity. First, because water has always been sacred, and second to combat (and actually recover) previous cults.

6 - Memorial Crosses

To end this panorama, remember that a large number of crosses serve as reminders. Thus the place of a brutal death, or on the contrary of a stroke of luck, is subjected to the erection of a cross. Along the same line let us quote the crosses of plague, which recall (and conjure) an epidemic, or the crosses of pilgrimage, which most often do not mark a step on a path, but recall the pilgrimage of the donor. Some "crosses of battles" are a solitary, and anonymous, remembrance a conflict.

7 - Private crosses

They bear the name of their owner or the person who had them built.

In Saint Bauzille, the Cross of Combet appears on the plans of the eighteenth century. The inscription recalls that it was placed again in 1804, after having been hidden during the Terror.

They are also found in the "mas" (farmhouses).